



# **WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC**

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## **BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES**



Papers presented at a conference held in Vanuatu from 11 to 14 August 1984




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Papers presented at a conference held in Port Vila, Republic of Vanuatu, from 11-14 August 1984. Co-organized and sponsored by the Development Studies Centre of the Australian National University, the Australian Development Assistance Bureau, Canberra and the Womens' Affairs Office, the Department of Social and Community Development, the Government of the Republic of Vanuatu, Vanuatu.



Development Studies Centre, The Australian National University,  
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## Abstract

In the slowly modernizing countries of the Pacific there is a growing awareness that, unless resources are used more efficiently and growth accelerated, 'primitive affluence' could become modern poverty. In the maintenance of living standards in the Pacific, and in the development process, women have a disproportionately onerous role, and receive but a small share of the benefits. In the law, the field of education, in the traditional economy, in business and in politics, women have low status — reflecting both their traditional cultures and the roles thrust on them by Western influences.

Small countries cannot afford to ignore the resources of any section of the community, let alone half the population. The contributors to this set of conference papers review aspects of the current situation in the Pacific island nations and provide some policy guidelines for the future.



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## Preface

The Executive Summary of the *Report of the Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Program* made two references of special interest to the work of the Development Studies Centre:

Para. 18 — Australia has special responsibilities and interests in the South Pacific;

Para. 24 — Australian aid programs should make a special effort to assist women to play a full and equal role in development.

Foreshadowing these expressions of concern, the Advisory Committee had agreed in 1983 that for the coming year the major conference on a development theme should examine issues concerning 'Women in Development in the South Pacific: Barriers and Opportunities'.

Following a precedent established in previous years the sub-committee nominated to plan the conference agreed that it should be held in a developing country where the issues to be discussed were relevant. Port Vila, the capital of the Republic of Vanuatu, was selected as the conference venue. In welcoming this proposal the government nominated the National Planning and Statistics Office, Office of the Prime Minister, as the liaison contact. The Women's Affairs Office, Department of Social and Community Development, was nominated as co-sponsor with the Development Studies Centre and the Australian Development Assistance Bureau (ADAB).


The objective of the conference was to bring together scholars interested in providing multi-disciplinary, analytical papers that would be useful in assisting the development of women in the Pacific. This volume is being published to make these papers, together with an introductory statement of issues, readily available. All papers in the volume thus represent only the views of the authors.

The major part of the funding requirement for travel and accommodation was met from a generous grant by ADAB. In addition


to those presenting papers from Australia, Papua New Guinea and Fiji, costs were met for participants from the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Western Samoa and the other islands of Vanuatu.

The conference was opened on 13 August 1984 by the Hon. O. Tahi, Minister for Education in the Republic of Vanuatu. In addition to sponsored invitees, some fifty persons representing a wide range of interests both from within the Republic and the region attended.

R.V. Cole



# **INTRODUCTION**





# 1

## Women in the development of the South Pacific

Helen Hughes

The islands of the South Pacific range from those with very low incomes to some of the highest income developing countries and territories in the world. Their populations are small, but while some have fewer than 5000 people in several isolated islands, Papua New Guinea has more than 3 million people. Some of the Pacific countries are well endowed with agricultural, mineral, forestry and hydro-electric resources, all have access to large fishing areas, and the Pacific environment and life-style provide a strong basis for tourism. The Pacific islands have relatively high per capita aid flows, in some cases exceeding \$1000 per annum. They have privileged access to industrial country markets and to capital flows.

Yet during the past 20 years or so, Pacific island countries have been among the slowest growing of all developing economies, and there seems to be a danger of further per capita growth decline in some of the islands. Low incomes and slow growth are reflected in relatively low social welfare indicators such as a low expectancy of life in some of the countries. Slow growth is not the result of smallness. The three most rapidly growing developing countries in the world — Malta, Singapore and Hong Kong — all have populations of fewer than 5 million. Malta's is a mere 400,000.

The Pacific islands' slow growth largely reflects social preferences and domestic policies rather than international conditions. Slow growth is not as costly as it is in many other countries because the Pacific is still enjoying 'primitive affluence': that is, the cost of obtaining such 'basic needs' as food, clothing and shelter is low and the price of leisure is accordingly high. Although change is relatively slow, the Pacific societies are nevertheless modernizing. There is growing awareness that unless resources are used more efficiently and growth is accelerated, 'primitive affluence' could become transformed into modern poverty. But accelerated growth, particularly if its fruits are to be equitably distributed, requires changing attitudes and policies, not least with regard to the role of women in development. Women have a disproportionately onerous role in

the maintenance and improvement of living standards in the Pacific and they receive only a relatively small share of the benefits.

While there are several demographic explanations for the relatively high male to female population ratios that are prevalent in the Pacific, they also suggest that low status is accorded to women. It is not surprising that in some islands women are emigrating in disproportionate numbers in comparison to men to improve their status and living standards. This, of course, exacerbates the male-female discrepancy. Education, health, work-force and income data indicate that women are disadvantaged in most Pacific countries and territories. Raising the status of women in Pacific countries and territories is not only essential from an equity point of view; small countries cannot afford to ignore the resources of any section of the community, let alone half of the population.

Status is a complex concept, reflecting long-established social and cultural traditions as well as legal, economic and political trends in society. Social and cultural traditions must be respected, but if there is to be a change in the status of women in the Pacific, new national policies have to establish legal, economic and political 'rules of the game', that give women equal opportunity with men. In addition, because of the major role that aid plays in the Pacific, it is also essential that aid donors ensure that their 'rules of the game' do not discriminate against women.

#### The legal status of women

In traditional Pacific societies gender responsibilities and rights reflected social and economic roles. Women's relatively weak physical stature and their child-bearing responsibilities generally relegated them to the less interesting aspects of family and communal life, but their contribution to production was balanced by men's tasks, and their position in society was personally, socially and economically secure. Women — through girlhood, puberty, marriage, motherhood and old age — had their place in society. The village community imposed strong sanctions against transgressors.

In modern society the cornerstone of the individual's rights is the law. Mere Pulea's survey lays the analytical foundations for the establishment of legal equality for women in the Pacific.<sup>1</sup> Three principal issues for policy emerge. First, some existing laws discriminate against women in the economic field — notably

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<sup>1</sup>Mere Pulea's paper was supplemented by an oral presentation by Meg Taylor which focused on the legal problems facing women in the transition from traditional to modern societies.

in land ownership and inheritance rights — and in nationality where a 'wife' does not have the same rights as a 'husband'. Second — and this is more important — modern, that is written law, does not cover many significant areas in which traditional rights and responsibilities are breaking down. In many instances customary law is in conflict with modern law and in other cases the breakdown of tradition is leaving a vacuum in which women are disadvantaged by a whole range of acts from personal violence to disinheritance. As traditional communities disintegrate women have little redress. The development of case law and a legal aid structure is thus required to establish equal rights. Third, Pacific countries lack the modern anti-discrimination laws that have been found necessary to give women equal rights and equal opportunities even in so-called developed countries. Areas of particular urgency for law making in view of the breaking down of traditional mores are in family law, personal rights, property rights and citizenship status. Laws, of course, have to be administered impartially and effectively if they are to be worth the paper on which they are written. In some Pacific countries improved administration of the law is essential if women are to have basic personal security.<sup>2</sup> Overall, a major agenda of careful research, policy formulation and implementation is needed in the legal area if women are to attain equal rights and status with men.

#### Educating women in the Pacific

Formal education achievements vary considerably in the Pacific from some of the lowest primary education participation rates in the world to relatively high secondary and tertiary education enrolments. In addition to participation rate problems, there are serious quality issues. At all levels, from primary to tertiary, many graduates are not achieving standards common in other developing and developed countries. Although education has attracted high government expenditures, serious questions about the cost effectiveness of these expenditures are now being raised as rapid population growth rates are placing a rising burden on school systems, reducing quality further. Yet formal education is the key to the future growth and development of Pacific societies, particularly to the role of women in that process.

Jenny Chilcott and David Lucas in their introductory statistical overview, and Esiteri Kamikamica in the paper on the Fiji experience in the education of women, indicate that girls represent less than their share of population in most Pacific education systems, and that their representation falls markedly

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<sup>2</sup>W. Clifford, L. Morauta and B. Stuart, *Law and Order in Papua New Guinea* (2 vols), Institute of National Affairs, Port Moresby, 1984.

from primary to secondary and tertiary levels.<sup>3</sup> Girls also tend to be pushed into 'women's' subjects such as domestic 'science', typing, shorthand and nursing rather than being encouraged to enter the professions. Some of these skills are very worthwhile. In fact women in the Pacific are often better trained vocationally than men, although this is not reflected in their salaries because salaries in 'women's occupations' are low. Vocational training has also been useful in giving girls skills which enable them to emigrate and thus rapidly raise their incomes and improve their status. But one of the effects of girls being poorly represented in academic classes at the secondary level, particularly in maths and science subjects, is that their entry into professional training at home and abroad is limited.

Poor access to education reflects low social status rather than formal barriers. Families spend their limited cash resources on the education of boys rather than of girls in societies in which school expenses may be major cash expenditure items. In some instances safety problems make it impossible for girls to go to school (Nakikus p.133). Schooling forgone in childhood and youth can only rarely be made up in later years. Women marry, have children and assume onerous family responsibilities early in life, and appropriate adult education is not available.

Formal education is not in a healthy state in the Pacific overall, and the education of girls and women urgently requires policy attention. The data for detailed analysis and policy formulation in education are ample, so that country by country reviews can be undertaken immediately. Several policy steps could be taken by governments concerned about the lagging education of women to encourage parents to overcome their reluctance to send girls to school. The fee structure could be adjusted to enable girls to study at lower cost than boys.<sup>4</sup> Community escort services could be provided where security is a problem. Small cash prizes for school performance could bring home the value of education to families. Secondary school scholarships and secure boarding facilities for girls are needed. Much can be done by national leaders through persuasion and example.

Informal, mainly adult education for women is not well developed in the Pacific. Present schemes largely focus on domestic skills, such as the use of improved stoves, and women's groups' income-earning efforts such as chicken raising. But the papers

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<sup>3</sup>Except at the University of the South Pacific. However, if island students studying at the tertiary level are taken as a group, that is, if those studying abroad are included, the proportion of women to the total falls well below 50 per cent.

<sup>4</sup>Although formal fees are largely limited to secondary schools, in practice even primary schooling involves costs of a fee-like nature.

discussing women's activities in the economy indicate rapidly developing commercial participation in marketing 'garden' products and crafts even in village environments, and greater participation in urban areas. Foreign aid for women's activities also largely flows to 'women's institute' type activities.

The present trends in informal training seem thoroughly out of date. Informal education for women needs thorough rethinking to move away from a 'women's institute' approach to training in basic skills such as reading, writing, arithmetic, bookkeeping, family and business law and so on, to enable women to compete commercially and to take part in political life.

Suliana Siwatibau's paper presents disturbing evidence of a lack of women's participation in aid sponsored training. There appears to be little formal discrimination, but practice is discriminatory. Following the primary and secondary education patterns, most women do not have the basic training necessary to take advantage of training abroad. Among the few who do, most have domestic responsibilities which the donor agencies will have to take into account if they want to increase women's participation in advanced training.

Donors wishing to assist women's education in the Pacific in a substantive way will have to focus on the shortcomings of present education arrangements for girls. Special 'catching up' training for women's education should be considered. This would depart from the 'women's organization' type of approach so as to transfer basic management skills that men acquire as a matter of course in their career development.

#### Women in the traditional economy

Women contribute key inputs into the family economy, and families (broadly interpreted), not individuals, are the predominant production and consumption units in the Pacific. Family units are particularly important in transitional situations where the 'gift' system has been extended to include major 'transfers', particularly from those working in the modern sector, so that the old, infirm and otherwise disadvantaged may be cared for. Household economies are particularly important in the rural areas which still account for 80 per cent or more of Pacific populations. Louise Morauta's paper, analysing the role of women in rural and urban households in Papua New Guinea, suggests that women enjoy markedly higher leisure as well as better material standards of living in urban than in rural areas.

Women have traditionally been responsible for the bulk of the garden production which is the cornerstone of 'primitive affluence'. But in some areas high population growth is placing pressure on subsistence agriculture. Growing cash requirements

necessitate increased garden activities for the market. With the introduction of cash crops (such as copra, coffee, cocoa and oil palm and smaller volume products such as vanilla) women's agricultural production responsibilities increase, for they also undertake a significant, and sometimes dominant, share of the work needed for cash crops. Rural women's other role in production is concerned with the provision of water and food and with child rearing. Frequently, considerable effort is involved in bringing up the water supplies. The evidence suggests that women are making a more than proportionate input into the activities involved in modernization, and that their leisure time is being eroded accordingly. At the margin, subsistence, commercial crop and household tasks compete for the limited time available in a working day, week and year. Much of the pressure on their time results from the unwillingness of men to spend cash crop income on family food supplies, school fees, clothing, pots and pans and housing improvements. Some of the cash crop income is reinvested, and some is spent on family needs, but a high proportion is spent on 'men's goods', notably alcohol. Margaret Nakikus and Stephanie Fahey's papers strongly suggest that transitional situations are the most difficult for women in this respect.

It is clear that if the economic and social situation of women in the Pacific is to be improved, the household economies are the focal point. Key inputs that are needed to make the work of women more productive will, of course, also raise incomes more generally. Margaret Nakikus' survey of land settlement schemes suggests that old-fashioned capital investment in roads, schools, water supply and so on has the greatest impact in raising women's productivity and improving their access to income-earning possibilities. Within agriculture the traditional garden sector has had least attention paid to it (because it is a women's responsibility?) and would benefit considerably from research inputs. Research has to be translated into practical technologies and women have to be introduced to these. This requires extension services for women. Aid donors could help fund such research and extension services.

Fishing is a well established component of Pacific island economies, traditionally accounting for a high proportion of food and particularly protein intake in coastal areas. Despite the marine riches that surround the islands, opportunities for inland fish development in some areas, and a multitude of national and regional organizations concerned with fishing, the industry is ailing in almost all its aspects. Most of the exceptional successes are the result of foreign investment. Penelope Schoeffel points out that the policy muddles that apply to fishing generally prevent women from developing their traditional roles effectively or assuming new roles in the development of fisheries.

The trade-offs between better quality garden and fishery food supplies and shop-bought food, particularly proteins, appear

to be quite important, and have national nutrition implications and macro-economic balance of payments effects.<sup>5</sup> Nutrition issues tend to loom large in discussions of Pacific development, in large part because the rapid transition to modern life-styles in urban areas has led to the adoption of some of the worst dietary habits of Western countries, with consequent obesity and health problems. Two sets of nutrition issues thus emerge: in rural areas nutrition problems are largely a function of low real incomes; in urban areas there is a need for the sort of education campaigns that are carried on in high income countries to improve eating habits.

### Women in the modern economy

Women are playing a growing role in clerical, administrative, professional and business streams in the modern economy, but their participation is limited, reflecting their neglected educational opportunities. (For Fiji figures see Kamikamica, Table 4.4, p.84.) Thus women are heavily clustered at the bottom of the limited occupational streams to which they have access, even teaching. Only improved access to education will enable major increases in women's participation in the professions, administration and business in the long run. In the short run, however, some improvement can be made by eliminating gender preferences in the specification of jobs, in establishing promotion criteria, and in setting hiring and promotion procedures.

Rodney Cole's paper focuses on the one area of the modern economy — financing small business — where change is already occurring. His case studies illustrate the problems of entrepreneurs and donors. Barred by their lack of educational qualifications from other possibilities, able women are beginning to take up business opportunities. The problem is not so much active discrimination against women as the lack of imaginative banking practices that would stimulate and assist all new entrepreneurs. Neither the public development banks nor the private commercial banks are sufficiently entrepreneurial. They do not provide the support that small businesses need. Institutional improvements are needed to stimulate small business growth and make sure that there is no discrimination against women. The development of small business opportunities for women will of course depend on the pace and quality of national growth and this is the responsibility of governments. The encouragement of non-traditional export products such as high quality tropical fruit and flower culture,

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<sup>5</sup>This is of course not an argument for substituting imported with locally bought food. The ability to purchase rice, canned meat and fish and other 'shop' foods has appreciably improved diets and consumers' welfare in many cases.

and the growth of the tourist industry, are likely to make a greater contribution to national growth and to provide more opportunities for female entrepreneurs than many traditional occupations.

#### Women in politics

Reflecting their low status, women have hitherto played a negligible role in political life in the Pacific. Grace Molisa's paper gives insights into the problems in one country. They are typical. Women's political groups in the Pacific, reflecting educational deficiencies and lack of administrative and business experience, do not have the ability to analyse and assess situations, and to formulate policies and political strategies accordingly. Faction fighting is therefore endemic. The establishment of the South Pacific Women's Resource Bureau at the South Pacific Commission will lead, it is hoped, to the groundwork that needs to be done on the long road ahead to full participation in political power.

## 2

### The socio-economic status of women in the South Pacific: a statistical overview

Jennifer Chilcott and David Lucas

It is generally perceived that the statistics on the position of women in development in the South Pacific (as well as many other countries) are not readily available. This paper aims to present some available indicators which may be useful in assessing the position of women in the development process in the South Pacific. There is much disagreement on what is actually meant by development. The Brandt Report (Brandt 1980) defines the term as desirable social and economic development which includes improved quality of life as well as improved productivity, or a profound transformation of the entire economic and social structure (Byrne 1983). Furthermore, the report states that: 'Every development policy, plan or project has an impact on women and cannot succeed without the work of women' (p.59).

In spite of this women may not be fully involved in the planning process (Lini 1984:15). Thus it is important to have some statistical indicators that will give some measure of the position of women in development. The selection of indicators mentioned covers both economic and social aspects. Owing to the disagreements on what actually constitutes development no one indicator can be used, and so a range of indicators must be examined.

#### Economic indicators

To gain some insight into the economic and social position of women in the South Pacific, it may be useful first to consider the information that can be gleaned from the general economic conditions prevailing in the countries. The indicators which can be used for this purpose are few, and there are some problems associated with their use, but they are of some value. The indicators presented are the Gross National Product (GNP) per capita, the rate of inflation, and per capita aid disbursement to each country.

Gross National Product per capita. The measure, GNP, is used in this paper to give some indication of a country's level of

Table 2.1

GDP per capita at market prices and average annual growth rates (1970-80), inflation rate, and total net disbursements of aid (GNP per capita rounded to nearest \$A10)

	GNP per capita 1981	Average annual growth rate of GNP per capita (real) 1970-80	Average annual percentage growth in the Consumer Price Index, all items 1975 = 100 1970-81	Total net disbursements of aid from all sources combined to individual countries 1981
	\$A per capita	%	%	\$A per capita
American Samoa	3630	-2.1	11.2	n.a.
Cook Islands	1020	5.8 <sup>a</sup>	13.1	517
Fiji	1740	2.9	9.1	88
French Polynesia	6070	2.3	10.2	913
Guam	5950	0.7	10.8	n.a.
Kiribati	370	-2.5	10.5	200
Nauru	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	310
New Caledonia	6170	-0.9	9.4	921
Niue <sup>b</sup>	940	n.a.	17.6	1032
Papua New Guinea	730	0.1	8.5	79
Solomon Islands	560	2.9	9.3	86
Tokelau <sup>b</sup>	580	n.a.	n.a.	700
Tonga	460	0.8	11.0	130
TTPI <sup>b</sup>	870	n.a.	n.a.	1065
Tuvalu	590	n.a.	9.0	506
Vanuatu	300	-2.6	9.6	169
Wallis and Futuna	890	n.a.	n.a.	643
Western Samoa	723	6.2 <sup>c</sup>	12.3	76
Low income economies	235	2.9	11.2	5
Excl. China and India	209	0.8	11.6	15
Middle income economies	1304	3.7	13.1	44
Lower middle income	739	3.4	11.1	32
Upper middle income	2165	4.2	18.6	61

<sup>a</sup>Growth rate of nominal GDP per capita.

<sup>b</sup>Note that the aid disbursements are larger than GNP.

<sup>c</sup>Nominal rate of growth of GNP per capita for 1971-77.

**Notes:** (1) The categories of countries are the same as those used in World Bank (1984).  
(2) Inflation rate is measured using the change in the GDP deflation.

**Sources:** OECD (1984); South Pacific Commission, *South Pacific Economies 1981: Summary of Statistics*, April 1984; SPC, *Statistical Bulletin of the South Pacific*, Nos. 9, 10, 12, 14, 16, 21, 22, *Retail Price Indexes 1975-82*; World Bank, *1983 World Bank Atlas, Gross National Product, Population, and Growth Rates*, Washington, DC, 1983; World Bank, *World Development Report*, Washington, DC, 1983; World Bank, *1983 World Bank Atlas*, Washington, DC, 1983; United Nations, *Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific*, Bangkok, 1980.

production and aggregate welfare (Table 2.1). As well as the value of domestic production, GNP includes income flows from overseas. These flows would include remittances and inflows of aid. (The Gross Domestic Product, which is often used to gauge economic performance, does not include income from overseas but includes depreciation, therefore GNP is a more appropriate measure for the purposes of this paper.)

As mentioned above, the level of GNP can be used to give an indication of the level of aggregate welfare in a country. The data given are GNP per capita, so that countries with different population levels can be compared. One major limitation of using GNP as a measure of welfare is that it does not take into account income distribution within the country.

In addition it is very difficult to measure the contribution of the subsistence sector, or non-monetary activities, to GNP. In the South Pacific countries, as with many other developing countries, the share of non-monetary value-added in GNP can be quite significant. Blades gives an indication of this contribution in a number of developing countries, in some of which over 80 per cent of GNP is accounted for by non-monetary activities (Blades 1975). In Papua New Guinea official estimates of the non-market component of GDP was 13.5 per cent of total real GDP (National Planning Office 1982:22). In a number of South Pacific countries women would contribute significantly to the non-monetary sector, often through their participation in agriculture and related activities. The contribution made by women to GNP in general is very difficult to measure, as is the distribution of GNP between men and women.

Even though this measurement difficulty is encountered it may be possible to make an estimate of the minimum contribution of women to GNP. For example, national figures of wages and salaries, which are usually available, could be divided into those earned by men and women. But this division itself can often be a difficult task. Furthermore, industries whose workforce is comprised mainly of females or males can usually be readily identified. For example, in most countries mining is a male dominated industry, while in some economies women dominate in the agricultural sector. The contribution of these industries to GNP also depends upon the value added in production in the industry as well as the number and influence of the men and women involved in it. (It may be that, though women form the main workforce, men are the decision makers.)

Other limitations to using GNP are, first, that the contribution of the subsistence or non-monetary sector to GNP is difficult to measure. This is the case in most of the South Pacific countries. Second, GNP in the small island economies may be overestimated relative to other countries. This could result particularly from a large expatriate workforce in a country, which is only there

for a short period of time. These people may have some of their salary paid in their home countries. Thus, while their full salary is included in GNP only a proportion is actually making any contribution to it. Finally, inter-country comparisons of GNP are difficult as the official exchange rates do not measure relative purchasing power. This is because a large proportion of GNP does not enter world trade, and trade policies may distort exchange rates.

Despite these limitations the use of GNP as an economic indicator is still helpful, especially if the contribution of women, or even part thereof, can be measured. The American and French territories have a much higher GNP level than the other countries, mainly because of the large number of expatriates in these countries. The Cook Islands boosts its GNP with a high level of remittances.

Other countries have been included in Table 2.1 for comparison. Most of the South Pacific countries fall into the middle income range of per capita GNP, while some are in the low income category. Generally, the South Pacific economies are not performing as well as other middle income economies, or the low income economies.

The inflation rate. The rate of inflation, derived from the level of the Consumer Price Index, is another indicator included (Table 2.1). The rate of inflation measures the cost of buying a fixed bundle of goods representative of the purchases of consumers. A high rate of inflation generally indicates that wealth is being unfavourably redistributed away from consumers and those on lower fixed incomes. A comparison of the inflation rate between the South Pacific countries reveals some variation, with Niue, the Cook Islands and Western Samoa having the highest rates. However, the inflation rate has generally been high throughout the last decade. Some developing countries have had inflation rates much higher than those in the South Pacific economies. In general, the inflation rates experienced in the South Pacific are below those with a similar level of GNP, with the exception of Niue.

Care must be taken when using the inflation rates of the South Pacific countries, mainly because the Consumer Price Index is usually measured only in urban areas, and also because, again, there are measurement difficulties. These factors could be significant as in many countries a large proportion of the population lives in rural areas. This points to the problems that women encounter with high inflation rates, as they often form the minority of the wage earning labour force and their incomes will not be adjusted for rising prices as would a wage income. In addition, with more trading being done in the modern cash economy, women may be increasingly disadvantaged.

Aid disbursements. The total net aid disbursements per capita are included in Table 2.1. Overall, aid given to the South Pacific countries is very high compared to other countries with a similar level of GNP and a comparable population size.

The countries of the South Pacific can be classified as either low income or middle income countries. From Table 2.1 then, comparing any South Pacific country with the average low or middle income country, the amount of aid received by the South Pacific countries is extremely high on a per capita basis. Presumably these high receipts of aid would put the South Pacific countries in a much more favourable position regarding development.

Within the South Pacific region the level of aid per capita received by the countries varies, with Niue, Tokelau and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands apparently receiving more aid per capita than the sum of their GNP. This could be explained by the type of aid that is given and inefficiencies in using the aid, and perhaps measurement inaccuracies of GNP. Where more aid is available it is assumed that there would be less competition for it, and hence projects to assist women are more likely to be considered.

The Report of the Committee to Review the Australian Overseas Aid Program — commonly known as the Jackson Report — stresses the need to make full use of the country's resources, including women (Australian Government 1984:80). The World Bank's view on providing educational opportunities to women is that it is one of the most effective uses of aid. The Bank has found that the more education women have the less likely their children are to die, the better fed their household is, the higher their age at marriage, and the more knowledge they have of contraceptives. The Committee Report gives one example of aid to Melanesia that obviously disadvantaged women (Australian Government 1984:84). It is not possible to identify from the information on aid per capita how much aid specifically goes to programs for the benefit of women. Nevertheless, women are identified as a disadvantaged group, and the Aid Review Committee indicated that a greater proportion of aid needs to help women specifically. With better organization in the future it may be possible to determine more exactly whether women are being assisted by aid or not.

### Population statistics

Growth rates. The growth rate of the population has repercussions for both the social and economic aspects of a country. Considering the economic aspects, the growth in GNP per capita is an important economic indicator as it is a quantitative measure of the effect of population on economic growth. Only if GNP is growing at a greater rate than population will GNP per capita be growing.

The measure of the growth in GNP per capita is more revealing than that of the growth in total GNP. It may appear that the total productive capacity of a country is increasing, but it could actually be declining relative to the growth in population. A comparison of the growth in population shown in Table 2.2 with the growth in GNP per capita in Table 2.1 indicates that for most countries the population is growing at a greater rate. The high population growth rates then could put a great deal of pressure on economic growth in the future. That is, a country may be apparently growing in its total productive capacity, looking only at GNP, but it may not in fact be keeping up with its population growth and is therefore actually falling behind in its development. In general, it appears that those countries with very high GNP per capita growth rates are those with relatively low population growth rates.

The growth rates in the South Pacific show some variation. Some countries with high fertility rates, falling mortality rates, and little international migration have extremely high growth rates (for example, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu). In the Solomon Islands the population could double within 25 years. However, there are other factors to be considered. The high growth rate for Wallis and Futuna in 1975-80 could be accounted for by a high rate of return migration, due to an economic downturn in New Caledonia. Similarly, the high population growth rate in Tuvalu in 1975-80 could be explained by the separation of Tuvalu from Kiribati after independence, and a resulting high level of return migration. The Cook Islands and Niue, on the other hand, both register negative rates of growth. This is due to the high rate of emigration of these islanders to New Zealand, and the high or perceived increase in economic and social benefits that will be received by them as a result of the move. Connell (forthcoming: MS 43) notes that much migration is primarily influenced by perceived economic inequality.

One result of a high population growth rate is that a great deal of pressure can be placed on the social infrastructure of a country. For example, demands on school places, medical facilities, transport, housing, food supply, nutrition and other natural resources (land, forestry and fishing grounds especially) will intensify (Chandra 1983:155). This will have particular effects on women; that is, if more school places are required, but they are not readily available, males may be given preference to females in gaining valuable positions (Ware 1981:43).

The sex ratio. The ratio of males per one hundred females in the total population, and in the population aged 15-64 years, is given in Table 2.3 for various countries. Generally, in the total population, males outnumber females. The only exceptions to this in the South Pacific are Kiribati, Tokelau and Tuvalu. A number of factors affect the size of the sex ratio.

Table 2.2  
Population (mid-1984) and average annual growth rates

	Estimated population	Average annual growth rate	
	mid-1984	1980-85	1975-80
	'000	%	%
American Samoa	34.7	1.7	1.8
Cook Islands	16.3	-2.1	-1.4
Fiji	686	2.0	1.9
French Polynesia	159	2.0	2.1
Guam	115	1.6	0.9
Kiribati	61.4	1.6	1.6
Nauru	7.7	1.3	1.3
New Caledonia	148	1.5	0.9
Niue	3.3 <sup>a</sup>	n.a.	-3.2
Papua New Guinea	3,353	2.8	2.7
Solomon Islands	263	3.6	3.4
Tokelau	1.6 <sup>b</sup>	n.a.	0
Tonga	106	2.0	1.6
TTPO	126	2.0	2.0
Tuvalu	8.1	1.6	3.9
Vanuatu	130	2.7	2.7
Wallis and Futuna	12.1	2.7	4.1
Western Samoa	162	0.9	0.7
Low income economies	2,402,011	1.9	1.9
Excl. China and India	581,620	2.7	2.5
Middle income economies	1,223,270	2.4	2.4
Lower middle income	706,856	2.5	2.5
Upper middle income	516,414	2.3	2.4
Industrial market economies	731,657	0.6	0.7

<sup>a</sup>Population at the 1980 Census.

<sup>b</sup>Population at the 1981 Census.

Sources: John Connell, *Migration, Employment and Development in the South Pacific, Country Report No.11, Niue*, SPC/ILO, 1983; *Migration, Employment and Development in the South Pacific, Country Report No.17, Tokelau*, SPC/ILO, 1983; South Pacific Commission, *South Pacific Economies 1980 Statistical Summary*, August 1982; US Bureau of the Census, *World Population 1983 - Recent Demographic Estimates of the Countries and Regions of the World*, Washington, DC, 1983.

An excess of males in the total population is quite usual, because generally more males are born than females. This initial difference though is partially negated by males having a higher mortality rate than females in societies where they receive similar treatment (Ware 1981:40-1).

Research indicates that an infectious disease agent, the hepatitis B virus, commonly occurs in the blood of Pacific islanders. In Melanesia and some other countries the sex ratio was increased when either parent, but particularly the father, was a carrier (Lucas 1980:153, 155).

Table 2.3

Sex ratios

	Census year	Males per 100 females	
		Total population	15-64 age group
American Samoa	1980	103	99
Cook Islands	1981	107	108
Fiji	1976	102	100
French Polynesia	1977	111	116
Guam	1980	109	113
Kiribati	1978	97	94
Nauru	1977	119	109
New Caledonia	1976	108	112
Niue	1976	101	96
Papua New Guinea	1980	110	109
Solomon Islands	1976	109	104
Tokelau	1976	90	73
Tonga	1976	105	100
TTPI	1976	107	106
Tuvalu	1979	88	74
Vanuatu	1979	113	115
Wallis and Futuna	1976	100	98
Western Samoa	1976	107	104

Sources: South Pacific Commission, *South Pacific Economies 1981 Statistical Summary*, April 1984; *South Pacific Economies 1980 Statistical Summary*, August 1980.

Differential mortality is a factor influencing the sex ratio, as shown by the life expectancy figures in Table 2.4. Women can expect to live longer than men in most countries of the region. The largest differences in life expectancy between men and women are in American Samoa, Guam and Nauru. Pirie (1982:24) has linked the high proportion of deaths caused by violence in the two American territories with their level of modernization, while Taylor (1983:1) has noted that alcohol and motor cycle injuries contribute to the importance of 'accidents and injuries' as causes of death in Nauru. Generally the life expectancy in the South Pacific countries is quite high, though some such as Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands have levels of life expectancy below the average for countries with a similar GNP per capita (World Bank 1984:218).

A further factor affecting the sex ratio is immigration and emigration. In the past males in Wallis and Futuna have shown a greater tendency to emigrate than females (Roux 1980). The high proportion of males in the working age group in most countries (those with a sex ratio of over 110) is usually due to high rates of emigration of males for jobs in those countries. Males tend to be more mobile than females.

Table 2.4  
Life expectancy at birth

	Year	Number of years	
		Male	Female
American Samoa	1981	71	78
Cook Islands	1981	64	70
Fiji	1976	60	63
French Polynesia	1971-76	60	63
Guam	1977	70	79
Kiribati	1978	50	54
Nauru	1976-81	49	62
New Caledonia	1976		64
Niue	1976	61	64
Papua New Guinea	1982	54	53
Solomon Islands	1981	54	54
Tokelau		n.a.	n.a.
Tonga	1981	60	61
TTPI	1973		61
Tuvalu	1979	57	60
Vanuatu	1961-63		50-60
Wallis and Futuna	1974-78	62	63
Western Samoa	1982	61	64

Sources: Shui-Liang Tung, 'The demographic effect of socioeconomic development in Guam', *Journal of Biosocial Science* (1982), 14:29; US Bureau of the Census, *World Population 1983*, Washington, DC, December 1983; Niue Department of Justice, *1976 Census of Population and Housing Report Volume 2, Analysis*, Niue Island, 1978; Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, *Population Data Sheet 1983*, Bangkok, 1983; South Pacific Commission, *South Pacific Economies 1980 Statistical Summary*, Noumea, August 1982; Taylor and Thoma (1983).

There is substantial emigration from some countries to the Pacific rim, that is, to the USA and New Zealand particularly. Exact numbers are very difficult to determine, however. Bedford (1983:36-7) has indicated that, in the period 1971-76, the sex

ratio for immigrants to New Zealand was 104 for the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau. But there are indications that women are following men in emigration. Connell (forthcoming: MS 3) mentions that a wave of women immigrants may occur as wives join their husbands, and that women are becoming increasingly significant as migrants.

The role of migration, both internal and international, is becoming increasingly important in terms of remittance flows in a number of countries. Remittance flows from overseas are especially important for the Cook Islands, Western Samoa and Tonga. For Tonga, well over half the trade deficit is covered by these financial flows (United Nations 1983:59). The contribution of women to international remittances is uncertain, but there is evidence of the increased role that women have in internal migration. Expenditure surveys in the Papua New Guinea Highlands found that employed single women tend to contribute a greater proportion of their wage to maintenance of the household than single men (see Fahey in this volume). Morauta (this volume) found that, among non-wage earning households, income from transfers outside the village was very important.

The national rates of population growth in Table 2.2 are not directly affected by internal migration, but internal movements can affect the rates of growth of the urban and rural sectors. In Papua New Guinea, Morauta noted that men are more mobile than women. However, Fahey notes that there is an increasing tendency for women to migrate. Substantial male out-migration may mean that the women who stay behind have greater responsibility for food production. Connell (1982:3) mentions that in some areas of the South Pacific a strong bias of male out-migration has resulted directly in malnutrition in their home village.

Fertility and family planning. In most countries in the region there is some evidence for a fertility decline during the 1970s. The exceptions are the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu, where the Total Fertility Rates are of the order of 6-7 births per woman. These countries with the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and Wallis and Futuna, have a common element in this respect. There are major difficulties in estimating the use of family planning, but these countries all have a relatively low level of current users (Lucas and Ware 1981). A Vanuatu maternal and child health survey in 1984 gives results that suggest a growing interest in family planning.

Some countries such as Fiji and Kiribati have had apparently successful family planning programs since the 1970s, though these may have lost some momentum in recent years. A general feature in the Pacific islands, as in Australia, is the heavy emphasis on female methods, notably orals, the IUD and female sterilization. For cultural reasons male sterilization is unpopular (Lucas and

Ware 1981:310). One of the positive benefits of migration is that return migrants appear to have had an effect in spreading knowledge of contraceptives in Tokelau and on depressing fertility levels in Niue (Lucas and Ware 1981:312).

### Human resources

Education. Sullerot (1971:169-99) has challenged any suggestion that both sexes had equal access to education in the 1960s. Amongst other things she noted that in many countries literacy rates were lower for females, and that girls had less opportunity for primary, secondary, and vocational and higher education. More recently Byrne (1983:59) has complained about 'considerable and continuing discrimination against women in all levels of education and training in many Third World countries'. These points will be considered here using data from the South Pacific.

Literacy is usually defined as the ability to read and write, but with rising levels of education many countries no longer ask this question in their censuses. For example, Western Samoa included the details of literacy for their 1971 census report, but not for 1976. In the 1971 census, virtually all Samoans aged 15-19 were literate. In contrast, in Papua New Guinea in 1971, 54 per cent of males and 34 per cent of females aged 10 or above were literate in English or another language.

The proportions of boys and girls attending school at each age have been published by the South Pacific Commission (1979: Table 8). The percentage of girls attending school peaks around age 9 in most SPC countries, and at this age school attendance is virtually universal, with some exceptions. In Papua New Guinea in 1971, 48 per cent of 9-year-old boys were in school, compared with 36 per cent of girls. In the Solomon Islands the corresponding figures for 1976 were 65 per cent and 52 per cent, and for Vanuatu in 1967, 75 per cent and 72 per cent.

Sullerot has suggested that, in many countries of the world, the teaching extended solely to girls is often of a lower quality, the teachers tend to be less qualified, the curricula abbreviated, and the drop-out rates higher. The quality of education presumably varies not only from country to country, but also between regions or island groups of the same country. Although the SPC statistics do not suggest higher drop-out rates for girls of primary school age, females aged 16 or above seem less likely to be enrolled in school, with the exception of Tonga (SPC 1979: Table 8). According to Byrne (1983:49) Melanesia and South Asia have the lowest female enrolments in the world in the 18-22 age range.

Papua New Guinea's *National Public Expenditure Plan 1983-86* (National Planning Office 1982) shows a high correlation between

the per capita income and school attendance in a region. In all regions there are more boys at school than girls, but the proportion of girls aged 7-12 attending school in 1980 was only 34 per cent, compared with 89 per cent in East New Britain. The proportion of girls dropping out between grades 1 and 6 declined in the late seventies, but rose again to 32 per cent in 1981. The Plan commented that this, combined with the lower enrolment rates for girls, 'reflect[s] community attitudes which value women less than men ...'. Furthermore, women form only 15 per cent of university enrolment so that 'the low female enrolments at post primary levels, together with the subjects popular with women, are both reflected in the low level of participation in the formal sector workforce ...'. In contrast, 36 per cent of the students at the University of the South Pacific in 1982 were females, and in Australia in 1981 43 per cent of the total number of university students were females (Association of Commonwealth Universities 1984).

Sullerot considers that in general women students in higher education are more likely to come from the upper social strata, and to opt for courses leading to teaching. This latter observation seems to hold true in the South Pacific. For example, if we consider the 16,285 persons recorded in the 1971 Papua New Guinea census as having professional and vocational qualifications, just under a quarter were women, almost all of whom were qualified in education or in 'medicine, para-medicine, and dentistry'. Of the 446 persons with qualifications in agriculture, forestry and veterinary science, only three were women; of the 2067 qualified in engineering, physical or chemical science, or technical fields, only twenty-one were women. In the census of Western Samoa in 1971, 2064 reported a field of training. Of these 832 (40 per cent) were women, 755 of whom were in education. The 1976 figures are not directly comparable, but they suggest that a few more women had received training in agriculture. The Fiji Agricultural Census shows that women are 33.6 per cent of the full-time workforce and 63 per cent of the part-time workforce (Slatter 1984:18).

The labour force. In developing countries virtually every man who has finished his education and is below the usual retirement age is in the labour force. Generally such men are considered as economically active unless it is proved otherwise, but for women the reverse is true, particularly if the woman is an unpaid family worker or works part-time in agriculture. Table 2.5 shows that, with the exception of Wallis and Futuna and Tuvalu, the proportion of adult women in the labour force ranges from 8 per cent to 48 per cent. In Wallis and Futuna 98 per cent of the 2008 females in the labour force were in agriculture. In Tuvalu, 2256 women were classed as being economically active outside of the cash economy. If only the 309 women in the cash economy were taken into account, the female labour participation rate in Tuvalu in 1979 would fall from 85 per cent to 10 per cent.

Varying definitions of the labour force, and of the major occupational groups, make comparisons between countries difficult. In addition, changing definitions can create problems of comparability within the same country. For example, Salale (1978) has shown how the percentage of women aged 10 and over recorded as economically active fell from 18 per cent in the 1966 census of Western Samoa to 12 per cent in 1971. He considers this fall to be mainly due to the reduction in the numbers of women recorded as being in agriculture, even though the traditional division of labour was being relaxed and women were spending more time than men weeding the plots.

Salale (1978:68) also notes that, in both Samoa and Tonga in the 1960s, village women's activities were typically a mixture of household duties, handicrafts, and food production. As shown in Table 2.6, according to the censuses in several Polynesian countries, women constitute less than 10 per cent of the agricultural workers, so it appears that women who spend only a part of their time in agriculture or fishing have been excluded from the labour force.

Oppenheimer (1967) has commented that, in the United States, certain occupations were over 90 per cent female, so that any increase in the demand for these skills is an increase in the demand for female workers. Women's employment in Great Britain has been concentrated in a small range of jobs in a small range of industries, since most British women work in occupations in which they form a majority. These jobs might be described as 'women's work' (UK Central Statistical Office 1974). By this standard, nursing would be regarded as women's work in Tonga in 1976, since only one of the 199 nurses recorded in the census was male.

The tendency for women to concentrate in occupations such as nursing and primary school teaching must contribute towards their being quite well represented in the 'Professional, technical and related workers' category in Table 2.6. However, with the exception of the American territories, Tuvalu and Western Samoa, they form less than 10 per cent of the 'Administrative and managerial' category.

### Composite indicators

This paper has referred to a number of indicators of the status of women in the South Pacific. For some of these indicators, such as the female contribution to the Gross National Product, very little information is readily available. For others, reliance often has to be placed on estimates (as with many mortality figures, for example), or on labour force statistics which are sensitive to changes in definition.

Morris (1980) has devised a composite index, the PQLI (the Physical Quality of Life Index), which gives equal weight to life

Table 2.5  
Female labour force participation in the South Pacific

Country	Census year	No. of adult females	No. in labour force	Participation rate (%)	Major occupational groups containing more than 20% of the female labour force
American Samoa	1970	7,075	1,854	26	Professional, technical and related workers: production and related workers
Cook Islands	1976	4,498	1,424	32	Professional, technical and related workers: production and related workers
Fiji	1976	172,055	29,470	17	Professional, technical and related workers: agricultural and related workers, etc.
French Polynesia	1977	36,928	12,310	33	Clerical: service (sports, entertainment, etc.)
Guam	1970	21,311	6,867	32	Professional, technical and related workers: clerical
Kiribati <sup>a</sup>	1978	17,188	1,420	8	Commerce, community services
New Caledonia	1976	38,637	15,818	41	Agricultural and related workers
Niue	1976	1,082	278	26	Professional, technical and related workers: production and related workers
Papua New Guinea	1971	785,318	161,947	21	Agricultural and related workers (including farmers and plantation workers)
Solomon Islands	1976	48,777	3,803	8	Professional, technical and related workers: agricultural and related workers
Tonga	1976	21,446	3,042	13	Professional, technical and related workers
TTPI	1970	23,810	3,042	13	Professional, technical and related workers: clerical, service

Tuvalu <sup>a</sup>	1979	3,025	2,565	85	Professional, technical and related workers: clerical (cash economy workers only)
Vanuatu (Vila and Santo)	1972	4,101	1,980	48	Service
Wallis and Futuna	1968	2,416	2,008	83	Agricultural and related workers
Western Samoa	1976	38,438	6,336	16	Agricultural and related workers

<sup>a</sup>Cash employment only.

Sources: Cook Islands Statistical Office, Central Planning Bureau, *Census of Population and Housing 1976*, Cook Islands, 1977:57, 159; *Reports on the Census of the Population 1976 Vol. III, Social and Economic Characteristics*, Parliamentary Paper No.44, 1974:65 (also, Vol. I, Parliamentary Paper No.13, 1977:16); French Polynesia Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques, *Résultats du recensement de la population de la polynésie française*, 29 Avril 1977, Annexes; New Caledonia Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques, *Résultats du recensement de la population de la nouvelle calédonie*, 23 Avril 1976; Niue Department of Justice, *1976 Census of Population and Housing Report, Volume 1, Basic Information*, Table 30, p.106 and Tables 35 and 25A, pp.94-97, Niue Island, 1978; Papua New Guinea National Statistical Office, *Population Census 1971, Population Characteristics, Bulletin No.1*, Port Moresby, pp.5, 6, 13, 14; Solomon Islands Statistical Division, Department of Finance, *Report on the Census of Population 1976, Volume 1, Basic Information*, Honiara, 1980, pp.12, 247-56; *Census of Population and Housing 1976, Volume 1, Administrative Reports and Tables*, Kingdom of Tonga, pp.157-91; *A Report on the Results of the Census of the Population of Tuvalu, 1979*, Tuvalu, 1980, pp.216, 235-6; US Bureau of the Census, *1970 Census of Population*, Vol. 1, Part 54, p.45 (Guam), Washington, DC, 1975; US Bureau of the Census, *1970 Census of Population*, Vol. 1, Part 56, p.19 (American Samoa), Washington, DC, 1973; US Bureau of the Census, *1970 Census of Population*, Vol. 1, Part 58 (Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands), Washington, DC, 1973; *Census of Population and Housing Vila and Santo, 29 October, 1972, Part 2: Population Data*, Vanuatu, 1973, pp.51, 52, 61-4; Wallis and Futuna Islands Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques, *Résultats du recensement de la population des Wallis and Futuna*, 26 Mars 1976, Paris, pp.13, 19, 37, 43; Western Samoa Department of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing 1976, Volume 1*, Apia, pp.19-27, 305-19; Kiribati, Report of Ministry of Home Affairs, *Report on the 1978 Census of Population and Housing, Volume 1: Basic Information and Tables*, Bairiki Kiribati, 1980.

Table 2.6  
Females as a percentage of the workers in major occupational groups

Country	Census year	Professional, technical and related workers	Administrative and managerial	Clerical	Sales	Service	Agricultural, forestry, fishery, and related workers	Production, transport, equipment operators, labourers and related workers	Workers not classified	All workers
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
American Samoa	1970	42	17	52	67	49	14	28	-	36
Cook Islands	1976	43	13	47	52	42	1	22	44	28
Fiji	1976	38	8	40	23	45	9	2	32	17
French Polynesia	1977	44	7	55	49	68	11	6	17	29
Guam	1970	46	20	64	65	43	12	5	-	31
Kiribati <sup>a</sup>	1979	36	1	37	30	31	2	3	50	21
New Caledonia	1976	48	6	58	50	29	41	7	13	34
Niue	1976	48	4	36	42	47	21	13	42	29
Papua New Guinea	1971	29	7	38	25	24	39	6	36	31
Solomon Islands	1976	23	4	20	15	25	22	4	8	17
Tonga	1976	37	← 34 →		47	17	1	5	46	16
TTPI	1970	22	13	49	62	40	20	6	-	23
Tuvalu <sup>a</sup>	1979	49	13	47	51	40	3	-	-	29
Vanuatu (Vila and Santo)	1972	38	2	47	49	79	16	2	8	28
Wallis and Futuna	1969	-	← 57 →	← 31 →			54	6	12	53
Western Samoa	1976	48	11	40	53	51	7	6	42	17

<sup>a</sup>For Tuvalu and Kiribati the percentages exclude women outside the cash economy.

Source: As for Table 2.5.

expectancy of age one, the Infant Mortality Rate, and the Literacy Rate. Morris shows that developing countries with a relatively low GNP, such as Western Samoa, may still have a high PQLI.

Although the PQLI perhaps puts too much emphasis on levels of mortality as indicators of the standard of living, it has the advantage that it can be calculated separately for males and females. Unfortunately mortality data by sex are not usually available in the Pacific and, as stated above, fewer countries are asking a literacy question in their census.

ESCAP (1984) has produced an MS (Measure of Status) based on ten indicators (two mortality indicators, one family planning indicator, four education indicators, and three labour force indicators). With a possible score of between 0 and 100, the maximum MS is 1000, and Australia scores 891, Fiji 736, Papua New Guinea 328, and Bangladesh 177. However, only seven indicators were available for Fiji and six for Papua New Guinea so these scores included a proportional upward adjustment to allow for this. The lack of data for some Pacific countries, and the problems of comparability mentioned above, may limit the usefulness of this index.

### Summary

The general problem with statistics on women in the South Pacific is in analysing the data already available. It is a lack of data analysis rather than lack of data that prevents more indicators on the position of women in the development process being available. The quality of these data is questionable at times though, and indicators derived need to be used jointly rather than individually. One positive step towards correcting this situation will be the statistical survey on women to be undertaken by the South Pacific Commission in conjunction with the Commonwealth Secretariat.

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# **WOMEN AND THE LAW**





### 3

#### The legal status of women in the South Pacific

Mere Pulea

The law has often treated men and women differently and there are provisions in law in which a person's sex has made the sole difference. Women usually cannot escape disabilities in the legal system, in customary law, or from discrimination imposed through governmental or commercial policies. Women, except for a small minority, are often ignorant of the extent of legal discrimination, perhaps because of the existence in some areas of 'protective' legislation, such as maternity benefit laws or those labour laws which restrict the employment of women at night. In practice, any discrimination could be unnoticed, particularly in areas of law where courts tend to favour a mother over a father in custody cases, either in maintenance or divorce, especially where young children are involved.

The achievement or denial of legal rights to women is often an indicator of a country's perception of the status of women and the role they play in the community and in national development. Any improvement in women's legal status is often interpreted within the framework of equality with men. Such an interpretation in the Pacific is fraught with difficulties because of the different roles men and women occupy in traditional societies. Generally, women's role is subordinate, and yet there are spheres where women earn a 'high' status, for example, if she bears many children, particularly sons, who would add strength to clan membership; or if she has special skills as a traditional healer.

Although there are areas in law that apply the doctrine of equality, cultural attitudes and policies often prevent women from participating equally. Heavy national budgetary commitments in educating and training both men and women each year make the denial of opportunities and the non-utilization of women's skills a heavy burden and loss when assessed against a nation's financial commitments.

Independence in Pacific countries has accelerated the pace of development. Kinship ties, the extended family system and the subsistence economy have all been affected by the changes. The transition to the new economy has had some effect on Pacific women.

With more opportunities for paid employment and education, women in some countries have in varying degrees outgrown their traditional roles as they take their place in a competitive and individualistic society. Other women participate within the fringes of the traditional and the modern systems. Their participation in either system is dependent on family pressures and the opportunities for education, training, employment and marriage.

Although the constitutions of various Pacific countries incorporate the doctrine of equality, Duchacek (1973:89-90) claims that 'most modern constitutions and their bills of rights accord women equal political and economic status but ... constitutions obviously cannot eliminate the natural differences between men and women. They can attempt, however, to eradicate sexual discrimination and inequality'. The Papua New Guinea Constitution states that 'all citizens have the same rights and privileges, obligations and duties irrespective of race, tribe, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed, religion and sex' (art. 55(1)). The constitutions of Kiribati, Nauru, Vanuatu, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu have similar provisions in that 'all persons are entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual without discrimination on the grounds of race, place of origin, religious or traditional beliefs, political opinions, language or sex'.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from the doctrine of equality, the various constitutions prevent the making of discriminatory legislation. For example, the Fiji and Solomon Islands Constitutions provide that:

- (a) no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect; and (b) no person shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by any person acting by virtue of any written law or in the performance of the functions of any public office or any public authority.<sup>2</sup>

The Western Samoan Constitution provides that:

- (1) all persons are equal before the law and entitled to equal protection under the law.  
 (2) Except as expressly authorized under the provisions of this Constitution, no law and no executive or administrative action of the State shall, either expressly or in its practical applications, subject any person or persons to any

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<sup>1</sup>Constitution of Kiribati, art. 3; Constitution of Nauru, art. 3; Constitution of Vanuatu, art. 5(1); Constitution of Fiji, art. 3; Constitution of Solomon Islands, art. 3; Constitution of Tuvalu, art. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Constitution of Fiji, art. 15(1); Constitution of Solomon Islands, art. 15 (1) and (2).

disability or restriction or confer on any person or persons any privilege or advantage on grounds only of descent, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, social origin, place of birth, family status, or any of them (art. 15(1) and (2)).

'Discrimination' is defined in the Solomon Islands Constitution to mean:

affording different treatment to different persons attributable wholly or mainly to their respective descriptions by race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex whereby persons of one such description are subjected to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of another such description are not made subject or are accorded privileges or advantages which are not accorded to persons of another such description.<sup>3</sup>

Although the Fiji, Kiribati and Tuvalu Constitutions have similar provisions to that of the Solomon Islands, they however exclude discrimination on the grounds of sex from this interpretation.

According to Marshall (1971:152): 'Equality is a matter of eliminating differences of treatment between persons based on irrelevant distinctions'. He considers that human characteristics such as skin colour, poverty, age and sex are: 'for almost all purposes irrelevant to the treatment which one person receives from another person. But to what extent should law and policy attempt to eliminate differences of treatment based on these human characteristics?'

Equality, however, cannot be absolute. Equality before the law, according to Marshall (1971:142) 'does not require every person to be treated in the same way, but only requires similar treatment for those in similar circumstances, or an absence of discriminatory treatment for those in different circumstances'. Constitutional assertions of equality in Pacific countries are balanced against other requirements such as special privileges, guarantees and protection for certain classes of persons such as children and young persons, women, and those who are socially or educationally retarded.

The doctrine of equality, 'to treat all alike, is bound to produce constitutional inequalities' (Marshall 1971:142). For example, the constitutions of the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu authorize the application and use of customary law where it involves customs followed by indigenous persons.

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<sup>3</sup>Constitution of Solomon Islands, art. 15(4). See also Constitution of Fiji, art. 15(2); Constitution of Kiribati, art. 15(3); and Constitution of Tuvalu, art. 15(3).

Such provisions give mandates to the courts to recognize and apply customary law and treat with a 'difference' as the imposition of a uniformity of treatment for all persons could bring about inequalities.

As the doctrine of equality must be balanced against other requirements, the various constitutions authorize that proper classification and discrimination should take place for certain classes of persons and, where these happen, discriminatory treatment is made permissible by legislation. For example, the constitution of Western Samoa provides that all persons are equal before the law, but it does not 'prevent the making of any provision for the protection or advancement of women or children or of any socially or educationally retarded class of persons' (art. 15(3) (b)). The Papua New Guinea Constitution makes provision for the making of laws 'for the special benefit, welfare, protection or advancement of females, children and young persons, members of underprivileged or less advanced groups or residents of less advanced areas' (art. 55(2)). The Vanuatu Constitution provides for 'equal treatment under the law, or administrative action, except that no law shall be inconsistent with this sub-paragraph insofar as it makes provisions for the special benefit, welfare, protection or advancement of females, children and young persons, members of under-privileged groups or inhabitants of less developed areas' (art. 5(1) (k)).

However, in practice, in spite of the doctrine of equality incorporated in the various constitutions, the law and policies have often accorded markedly different treatment to men and women. As seen in the various constitutions, 'equality' in Marshall's view:

is only one of the number of ends that liberal democratic communities seek to implement. Others are freedom, security, justice and welfare. When these values clash, there may be a number of ways of describing what is at issue. The jurisprudence of equal treatment shows how those who apply notions of equality to particular cases start out with an assumption that equality is not merely uniformity, sameness or identity of treatment. Legislators or society classify different persons or groups of persons and treat them differently, if the basis of the classification meets certain requirements (Marshall 1971:153).

### Political rights

The right to vote and freedom to participate in the political process is integral to the principle of legal equality, and provisions are made in the various constitutions attesting to this principle. The constitutions of Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Nauru, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Tonga and Tuvalu grant both

sexes the right to vote providing they are citizens and have attained the age of 21 years (Fiji and Tonga), 20 years (Nauru) and 18 years (other islands). Those serving prison sentences in excess of 6 months, those adjudged to be of unsound mind, and those who have committed offences relating to election are disqualified from voting in national elections. The Tongan Constitution adds further qualifications in that

Every Tongan subject of twenty one years of age or more who being a male and not a noble pays taxes and being a male or female can read and write and is not insane or imbecile and is not disabled by the twenty-third clause (disabilities of convict) shall be entitled to vote in an election of representatives of the people to the Legislative Assembly and on the day appointed for election shall be exempt from summons for debt (art. 6A).

However, although the constitutions grant both sexes the right to vote, the number of women elected to Parliament or public office is low. Nahau Rooney states that in Papua New Guinea 'since the establishment of the First Elected Democratic Government in 1964 there has been a total of 31 women who have stood for the national elections, but only 3 have won a seat in Parliament' (Rooney 1984:2). In Fiji in the last elections (1982) only one woman, Mrs I. Jai Narain, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, was elected to Parliament. Mrs Rooney's observations in Papua New Guinea reflect the attitudes elsewhere in the Pacific in that 'the traditional expectation of the role of women in society past and present is still against women working in an all male profession; and that women themselves are most reluctant and unco-operative in supporting women leaders and during voting many of the women vote with their husbands' (Rooney 1984:4).

### Citizenship

Before independence, the local inhabitants in most Pacific countries were either citizens or 'protected persons' of the countries who administered them. For example, those born in Papua were technically Australian citizens, but they had no right to enter or remain in Australia, or even to leave their own country. Those born in New Guinea had the status of 'Australian Protected Persons'. Although in the years before independence permission to enter or leave the country was readily granted and the Papua New Guineans were issued with Australian passports, the technical barrier remained (Goldring 1978:204). For the countries which came under British colonial rule such as Fiji, Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Tuvalu, the people were British subjects within the ambit of the British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act 1914. But as different laws began to be introduced by independent members of the Commonwealth, and following a Commonwealth Conference in 1947, a new method was introduced, giving each of the

people of the countries as they became self governing a particular status as citizens of their own country and a common status as members of the wider association of the Commonwealth. So far as the United Kingdom is concerned, the law is now contained in the British Nationality Acts 1948-1964 under which British subjects may be either citizens of the United Kingdom and colonies or Commonwealth citizens.

The determination of citizenship status is a subject which has been given considerable attention as colonies in the Pacific have become independent. The complexities of the Cook Islands, Niue and Western Samoa citizenship laws require a special study and will not be included in this overview. This does not mean that citizenship issues in other countries were less complex. The complexities developed around specific features of politics. In the case of Britain the concern was what to do with those who did not qualify for citizenship of the newly independent countries and the numbers that had to be settled in Britain against strong anti-foreign feelings. The provisions to prevent dual nationality forced persons to commit themselves only to one country. With mixed race and immigrant communities such as the Indians in Fiji and the I-Kiribati community in the Solomon Islands, this requirement tended to divide the indigenous and immigrant communities who were forced to be loyal only to one country. Not only were politics pursued around immigrant communities, but the question of rights to land and the right to participate in development, politics, power and resource-sharing underlay the critical issues of citizenship.

Those persons who at the time of independence were non-citizens, but were already settled in the country and did not meet the criteria laid down by the country in choosing its citizens, either left the country or were covered by certain legal provisions that allowed them to stay. Special problems arose around those non-citizens who were married to indigenous citizens, the children of the marriage and illegitimate children where one parent was a citizen.

Although there is a strong tradition of hospitality amongst Pacific islanders, which is extended to persons of those categories, there was nevertheless deep concern raised because of the fundamental issues, particularly in small countries in the Pacific limited by geographic environment, on the questions of land, marriage to indigenous persons and the economic, political and social positions of non-indigenous persons. Where the constitutions and national laws gave these categories of persons protection and security, such provisions were seen in the light of regional and international cooperation to minimize the risks of misunderstanding and friction that could arise between the countries in the region.

### Who can be a citizen?

Constitutions in the Pacific contain various rules and basic principles which signify far-reaching guarantees for the protection of citizens. The constitutions not only discriminate against those from outside the country but also against several categories of persons within the country, and set the principles for the acquisition of citizenship.

Equal treatment principles in the constitutions are balanced against other measures such as the rights of indigenous citizens to customary land, as in Vanuatu and Western Samoa. The question of citizenship often cannot avoid the suggestion of racial discrimination but the approach taken in most Pacific countries is that the rights of indigenous citizens, founded on ancestral lines, must be distinguished from other legal categories of citizens. One of the reasons for this distinction is based on the fact that the right to customary land belongs only to an indigenous community. This concept in Vanuatu directly vested all land in the 'indigenous custom owners and their descendants' (art. 71).

The distinction is also made between the rights of automatic and naturalized citizens; the rights of those born within and those born outside the country; the rights of male and female citizens married to foreigners; and in some countries the distinction made between legitimate and illegitimate births.

Automatic citizenship by indigenous ancestry in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea is based on two grandparents, whilst Vanuatu has broadened the scope to four grandparents 'who belonged to a tribe or community indigenous to Vanuatu' (art. 9). The ancestral claim in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands is broader in scope and entitles those of related ethnic ancestry also to be citizens, for example in Papua New Guinea 'those born in adjacent areas (Solomon Islands, Irian Jaya and islands in Torres Strait)'.<sup>3</sup>

In the case of Fiji, Kiribati and Tuvalu, all people born in the country who are citizens of the United Kingdom and colonies, or have become citizens by naturalization under the British Nationality Acts 1948-1965, or who have registered under those Acts before independence day, are declared citizens. The Constitution of Nauru confers citizenship status on persons born since 31 January 1968 if, 'his parents were Nauruan citizens at the date of birth'. A person born in Nauru of a marriage between a Nauruan citizen and a Pacific islander and a person born in Nauru who does not have the nationality of any other country, can become Nauruan citizens.

Persons born outside the country. For persons born outside the country after independence, the acquisition of citizenship is dependent on the citizenship status of the parents. The

constitutions of Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea make no distinction between parents and gives them equal status in the determination of the citizenship status of a child born outside the country. For example, in the provisions for Tuvalu:

a person born outside Tuvalu after the day prior to Independence Day shall become a citizen of Tuvalu at the date of his birth if at that date either of his parents is, or would but for his death have been, a citizen of Tuvalu (art. 23).

However, not all countries adopt this standard of equality. The constitutions of Fiji and Kiribati single out the position of the father in the case of a birth within wedlock and the father's superior position over the mother on the one hand; and the unmarried mother's superior rights over the child as against the natural father of the child in the case of births out of wedlock. For example, the Fiji provisions are: 'a person born outside Fiji after 9th. October 1970 shall become a citizen of Fiji at the date of his birth if at that date his father is a citizen of Fiji' (art. 22); and 'any reference ... to the father of a person, shall in relation to a person born out of wedlock, be construed as a reference to the mother of that person' (art. 26.(2)). The provisions in the Kiribati Constitution are similar to those of Fiji (arts. 25 (2) and 29 (1) (c)).

The persistence of the unequal position between parents in an area of law concerned with citizenship status runs against the equal treatment principle, and the distinction made between legitimate and illegitimate births affects the interests of the child. Whether such distinctions should be detached from the area of law concerned with citizenship and, second, whether both parents should be brought within the ambit of the principles of equality is worthy of consideration.

The foreign wife. The legal status of foreign women married to nationals of a country occupies a special position in that they are given a choice to acquire the citizenship of the country of their husbands. Marriage does not automatically affect the citizenship of a foreign woman although in Fiji she is required to apply for registration as a citizen and supply documentary proof that she has renounced her previous nationality or citizenship. If she is unable to do this she must show proof that the laws in her country do not allow her to renounce her citizenship. This requirement is necessary as, like other countries in the Pacific, the laws of Fiji do not allow dual citizenship.<sup>4</sup>

In the Solomon Islands, a male Solomon Island national could make application and request that his wife (not a citizen)

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<sup>4</sup>Fiji Citizenship Act 1978, section 6.

and children become citizens by naturalization, but it is mandatory for the wife to include in the application a statement that she wishes to become a citizen.<sup>5</sup> Under Tonga's Nationality Act<sup>6</sup> an alien woman can become a citizen on marriage to a Tongan provided that within twelve months of the date of marriage she: (a) lodges with the Minister of Police a written declaration that she wishes to assume Tongan nationality; and (b) takes the Oath of Allegiance.

The foreign husband. The preferential treatment given to male nationals married to foreign wives infringes the principles of equality when considered against the status of female nationals married to foreign husbands. For example, the Solomon Islands Citizenship Ordinance 1978 (s.8) imposes few conditions on a foreign husband of a female Solomon Islander for the acquisition of citizenship by naturalization. A foreign husband can apply for naturalization if he is of 'full age and full capacity' providing that the Citizenship Commission is satisfied that:

- (a) he has been resident in Solomon Islands for ten years on the date of application;
- (b) he intends to continue to reside in Solomon Islands;
- (c) he is of good character;
- (d) unless prevented by physical or mental disability is able to speak and understand sufficiently for normal conversational purposes, English, Pidgin or a vernacular of Solomon Islands;
- (e) he has a respect for the culture and way of life of Solomon Islands;
- (f) he is unlikely to become a charge on public funds;
- (g) he has a reasonable knowledge and understanding of the rights, privileges, responsibilities and duties of citizenship;
- (h) he has renounced in the prescribed manner any citizenship he may possess; and
- (i) he has taken and subscribed to the Oath of Allegiance.

The status of expatriate husbands in Fiji generated the widest discussions before the Parliamentary Select Committee to Review the Immigration Policy of Fiji.<sup>7</sup> The Committee appointed in April 1974 reported that the question of citizenship rights of expatriate husbands married to female Fiji citizens was the subject of the greatest number of submissions. The 'submissions ranged from a complete ban to a complete liberal policy of allowing all applicants' (para 7.7) and concern covered such areas as the fear that any relaxation of the conditions would result in wholesale marriage of Fijian girls to expatriate husbands, the

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<sup>5</sup>Citizenship Ordinance 1978, s.8 (3) and (4). See also Solomon Islands Constitution, art. 23.

<sup>6</sup>See Laws of Tonga (cap. 32).

<sup>7</sup>See *Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee to Review the Immigration Policy of Fiji* (Parliamentary Paper No.2 of 1976). Also *Report of the Fiji Constitutional Conference 1970* (Legislative Council Paper no.5 of 1970).

great increase in the population of part-Fijians, and subsequently the complete loss of identity of the Fijian race; a greater number of Indian husbands coming from India to Fiji; the pressures on land; and the problems associated with local employment.

As the Committee was unable to arrive at a unanimous conclusion on this matter they recorded the various recommendations for the Report, including one that stated 'expatriate husbands should be treated in the same manner as expatriate wives' (7.13 (d)).

The implementation of this recommendation has not occurred in the last ten years and the Fiji Citizenship Act (cap. 87. s.9) imposes conditions for the naturalization of an alien if the Minister is satisfied: (a) that he is of good character; (b) that he has an adequate knowledge of the English language or any other language current in Fiji and the responsibilities of a citizen of Fiji; (c) that he has been lawfully resident in Fiji throughout the nine years immediately preceding the date of application and has not been absent from Fiji during such period for a period or periods amounting in all to more than eighteen months; (d) he intends in the event of a certificate being granted to him to continue to reside in Fiji.

Under the Tongan Nationality Act, foreign husbands of Tongan females can make application to the King for Letters of Naturalization if he satisfies His Majesty (s.9(1)): (a) he is he has resided in Tonga for not less than five years; (b) he is of good character and has an adequate knowledge of the Tongan language; (c) that he intends to reside in the Kingdom. The grant of the Letters of Naturalization is at the absolute discretion of His Majesty.

Other requirements. The provisions affecting residential requirements in the citizenship laws that relate to foreign husbands of female nationals are also affected by employment/labour laws and immigration laws. Viewed in this context the position of a female citizen married to a foreigner is even less favourable and the effects on her and the family are quite significant, as residential qualifications are also determined by immigration and employment laws.

For example, under the Fiji Immigration Act (cap. 88 s.8) the Permanent Secretary has discretionary powers to issue a permit to any person 'entitling him to enter and reside or to reside or work in Fiji', provided that he meets the conditions for security and employment. The Solomon Islands Labour (Amendment) Ordinance 1978 makes provision for work permit requirements for non-indigenous workers. Under section 2 a 'non-indigenous worker' means any person not entitled to enter the Solomon Islands without complying with section 8 of the Immigration Act. The Immigration

Act 1978 (s.8) provides that 'the Principal Immigration Officer may issue a permit ... to enter and reside in Solomon Islands [provided that] (a) such person has obtained a work permit from the Commission of Labour under section 68 of the Labour Act. [The Labour (Amendment) Ordinance 1978 prevents the employment of an immigrant or non-indigenous worker unless such a worker has obtained a work permit from the Commissioner.] (b) [he] is not subject to a deportation order under section 5 of the Deportation Act; and (c) such person's financial status is adequate and he has Ministerial approval.'

As the legal provisions that affect foreign husbands under citizenship laws are interlocked with the legal requirements in the immigration, employment and deportation laws, the disadvantage to female citizens married to foreigners is greater and goes deeper than is at first apparent. Where foreign husbands do not meet the requirements laid down under these various laws, the current practice has been for female nationals to leave their countries and take up residence elsewhere.

In the absence of any figures as to the numbers of female citizens married to foreigners in any one country, it is difficult to make an evaluation of the effect of such marriages on population structure and migration patterns. If in fact there is no appreciable difference and increases in population can be balanced with out-migration, a review of citizenship laws to give equal treatment to female nationals needs much consideration.

Women's loss and regaining of citizenship. The regaining of citizenship after it has been lost is an area of law that singles out women and places them in a separate category to that of men on the presumption that men rarely elect for foreign nationality when married to a foreign wife. Although a woman does not automatically lose her citizenship upon marriage, she is required under law to renounce her citizenship if she wishes to obtain the nationality of her husband. However, should she wish to regain her original citizenship, she cannot do so automatically without complying with various legal conditions, e.g.:

- (a) In the Solomon Islands under the Citizenship Ordinance (s.11 (2)) a Solomon Islands woman can regain her citizenship, if the Citizenship Commission is satisfied that her marriage has broken down, but in practice may or may not grant such an application.
- (b) The Citizenship Act of Kiribati (cap. 8A, Ed. 1981) (section 10) has the same proviso.
- (c) The Fiji Citizenship Act also requires that a woman of full age and capacity who has ceased to be a citizen of Fiji upon marriage, is entitled to resume her Fiji citizenship if she satisfies the Minister: (i) 'that her marriage has been dissolved, or that she is separated from, or has been abandoned by her husband,

or that her husband has died; and (ii) that she intends to reside in Fiji'(Section 15(3)).

(d) Under the constitution of Papua New Guinea, the regaining of citizenship can be by virtue of section 65 (automatic citizenship) or s.66 (citizenship by descent) – only after five years continuous residence in the country, after the loss of citizenship and in the 'deliberate judgment' of the minister responsible for citizenship matters. In the case where a person has been naturalized, but has subsequently lost that status through marriage, citizenship will only be regained according to the laws of naturalization and no recognition of previous residency in the country before the loss of citizenship will be taken into account (art. 73). However, where a married person became a citizen or national of the country of the spouse and the marriage has permanently broken up, regaining of citizenship may be granted, if the person had, at the time the marriage broke up, been resident in the country for three years on the date the marriage broke up, or if the person was at the time the marriage broke up resident outside the country. However, regaining of citizenship may also be granted, where the marriage has permanently broken down at the time the person was resident outside the country, on his/her return to reside in the country for a period of three years (art. 73(2)). Papua New Guinea makes no distinction between males and females in this area of law although permanent marital breakdown is one of the conditions for the regaining of citizenship.

Under Tonga's Nationality Act a Tongan woman can regain her nationality if her husband has died or her marriage has been dissolved, if she lodges with the Minister of Police an application of her wish to regain Tongan nationality.

Proof of marital breakdown in regaining citizenship that has been lost is on a sliding scale from abandonment and separation to permanent dissolution, and the power to grant an application to regain citizenship is at the discretion of the Minister or Citizenship Commission as the case may be. Proof of marital breakdown as a condition for females to regain a birthright is a troublesome area in both law and philosophy, as it attaches an aura of blame even where a woman is not the guilty party, and places her in a situation of double trauma where she is twice forced to prove a failure in marriage.

Minister's discretion. The last aspect for consideration is the discretionary powers of ministers or of those responsible for administering the citizenship laws. Under the Fiji Citizenship Act the minister has very wide powers and he: 'shall not be required to assign any reason for the grant or refusal of any application under this Act the decision on which is at his discretion, and the decision of the Minister on any such application shall not be subject to any appeal for review in any Court' (s.18).

The question of the minister's power of discretion came under review in the Fiji Supreme Court in the case of Dr Mary Schramm. In this case a judicial review was sought for a declaration that the applicant was eligible or entitled to be registered as a Fiji citizen under the Act and, alternatively, for an order to register the applicant as a Fiji citizen under the Act. The grounds that the applicant relied on stated that the minister was wrong in law in holding that the applicant did not qualify to be registered as a Fiji citizen under section 5 of the Fiji Citizenship Act 1971; that the decision was wrong in that no reason had been given for refusal; and that the decision was wrong because the applicant had satisfied all the requirements mentioned in section 5(1) (a) (b) and (c) of the Citizenship Act; and that the minister had no further discretion left in him but to allow the applicant to be registered as a Fiji citizen. The appeal was allowed.

Whether this case indicates a significant opportunity for women to bring about desirable changes, or whether it is an indication of the direction of the courts' approach with regards to unfettered powers, is too early to predict.

#### Women's rights in land

Land tenure systems in the Pacific are complex. Women in a patrilineal kinship system in rural communities cannot be supported easily without land, a father, uncle, brother, husband, son or other male relatives. In a matrilineal system such as in the Guadalcanal Plains, Solomon Islands, where customary land rights 'depend on membership of a line, and are usually inherited matrilineally' (Ruthven 1979:58), women's rights to land are not so dependent on males.

It would be simple to describe land holding systems in the Pacific as communal where families and kin-group have the right to live and plant. The right to live and plant and the right to 'hold' and control land are dependent on birth, descent and group membership. Although the inheritance of land, for example, in the Guadalcanal Plains is usually inherited matrilineally, 'actual ownership is said to be with smaller groups within lines called *mamata*, whose holdings are often widely dispersed' (Ruthven 1979:58). The rights to land are also governed by complex rules of heredity and succession rights, the rights of male primogeniture (Tonga, Kiribati) and the right to use land in some communities where 'the chiefs and elders of the tribes see that members of their tribes have the right to use the land fairly and evenly according to their wishes' (Zoleveke 1979:3).

Generally, the preference in some Pacific societies to give land rights to male heirs and agnates makes women dependent and perpetuates their dependency when passed over in favour of

male heirs such as brothers, uncles, sons, grandsons or nephews of the deceased male holder.

Women as members of households have rights to use and cultivate land and at marriage acquire rights to use the lands of the husband's family, but continue to retain some rights to land in their own descent group. As a member of the household a woman participates equally in the general welfare of the family, meets family obligations in times of life crises and shares in the family's community obligations. Women cannot inherit land unless through the holding rights of a matrilineal society, or through transfer on intestacy (Kiribati) or as a widow in gaining a life interest in a deceased husband's estate (Tonga). Customary land cannot be bought or sold as freehold and its devolution is governed by traditional rules and practices.

Historically, Pacific countries experienced the loss of land to other settlers until portions of land had to be set aside and 'reserved' for the exclusive use of the indigenous population. These lands were administered under various land ordinances and appropriately registered. Plural legal systems within a country in relation to land were not an uncommon feature as laws developed around special interests of different ethnic groups. Hence there were laws for 'natives' and laws for others. In Fiji, for example, the Banaban Lands Act (cap. 124) and the Rotuma Lands Act (cap. 138) provided separately for lands in Rabi for the Banabans and in Rotuma for the Rotumans, whilst the Native Lands Act (cap. 133) and the Native Land Trust Act (cap. 134) provide for indigenous Fijians. This protective discrimination in favour of ethnic groups is excluded from the application of the principles of equality. To formalize the land law under one system would bring about fundamental inequalities.

Those lands outside 'native ownership and reserves' were divided into State or Crown land, freehold, leasehold and vacant lands over which an individual could exercise rights. Opportunities for individual ownership are equal for both men and women but the disabilities women suffer are economic and social where women are often unable to exercise their rights to buy or lease land, as banking laws relating to loans, security, taxation and insurance are often prohibitive, and as a woman she is considered a risk. As a wife, divorcee, widow or unmarried mother her position is even less favourable.

Some Pacific countries have brought about extensive changes at independence to the land tenure systems and the rights of ownership. Titles to land in pre-independence times under colonial rule were changed, as in the case of Vanuatu where all land became vested in custom owners and their descendants (art. 71). In Western Samoa, the alienation of customary land was prohibited and, in Fiji, the bulk of the land was held under Fijian ownership and control. Whether these changes have made any difference to

the rights of women to land holding and usage, whether they are given more opportunities and rights which they did not have before, or whether women are further disadvantaged under the new system are questions that require in-depth research.

Because of the complexities of the law in this area and the difficulties involved in generalizations, the land laws of Tonga and Kiribati have been selected to advance our understanding of some of the issues involved.

Tonga. All land in Tonga is the property of the Crown, divided into hereditary estate, tax or town allotment. The interest of a holder in an estate or allotment is a life interest subject to prescribed conditions and is inherited according to the prescribed rules of succession.

Women cannot automatically inherit an hereditary estate as it must devolve on a male heir in accordance with the customary rule of male primogeniture as set out in the tables of succession: 'the male issue shall be preferred to female issue of the same degree' (Land Act s.41). Land held by a widow cannot pass to her daughter if a son exists. But where no male 'heir of the body' exists and there are only females, then the females take life interest. But a female's interest is lost on her marriage or if she is found by the Land Court to be guilty of fornication and adultery. A widow's husband or son by her second marriage cannot inherit the land. Illegitimate children, whether male or female, cannot inherit the land.

Under the Land Act, a wife in occupation of husband's town or tax allotment can obtain a life interest in it at his death and she cannot dispose of her allotment by will. Her husband's heir cannot divest her of land to which she has a valid title unless she re-marries or is found by the Land Court to be guilty of fornication and adultery (s.74).

Subject to the life estate of the widow, the succession to a tax or town allotment follow strict rules where: (a) descendants are traced through the last lawful male holder; (b) only persons born in wedlock may inherit; (c) inheritance shall descend in the first place to the eldest son of the deceased holder, but if the son is dead, then to the eldest male 'heir of the body' of such a son; (d) but if there are no sons, then any unmarried daughter of the deceased holder shall inherit for her life, but if there are two or more unmarried daughters, they shall inherit all together jointly for their lives, but the life estate of any daughter terminates on her marriage or upon proof in proceedings in the Land Court that she has committed fornication and adultery; (e) in default of any unmarried daughter of the deceased holder, an allotment descends to the deceased holders brother, or, if he is dead, his eldest male heir. If there are

no persons entitled to succeed to the allotment, it will revert to the Crown if situated on Crown land (s.76 and 77).

As widows or any daughters succeeding to the allotment are required to pay tax (s.59) they are dependent on paid employment, the sale of produce or handicraft, to meet this obligation. An act of adultery or fornication threatens her position and she stands to lose her rights to an heir. Where a woman's work on the husband's estate has been considerable the conditions through which she loses a life interest are inequitable.

Leases can only be granted at the consent of Cabinet but 'consent will not be granted to a lease by a widow of the land of her deceased husband' (s.83). The Land Act also provides for Teachers' Allotments where the Minister for Land upon the application of the Minister for Education shall make provision for an allotment of 8¼ acres for the use of the head teacher of any government primary school who is a male Tongan subject (s.52).

Kiribati. Under the Native Lands Ordinance (s.20) a child born to a single woman can inherit land and property from his putative father in accordance with customary law in the same way as the father's legitimate children. If the putative father does not acknowledge paternity of the child, but the Court is satisfied he is the father, the Court may order that the child live with the mother and transfer to the child title to any portion of land or other property owned by the father as is necessary for the child's maintenance and support. If the father does not acknowledge paternity and he owns no land, the Court can order monetary assistance or maintenance by the supply of foodstuffs until the child reaches the age of 21 years.

The Gilbert and Phoenix Islands Land Code (1977) is the code of laws governing native land rights in eighteen of the islands of Kiribati.<sup>8</sup> The code regulates the distribution of native lands, fish ponds and fish traps of the owner to his spouse(s) and children (legitimate, illegitimate and adopted); gifts of land for nursing the owner who is incapacitated by illness; gifts for kindness; gifts for wet-nursing a child; and a gift by a man to his wife or a wife to her husband during marriage.

An owner's control, use and distribution of land is subject to various conditions of which the care of his family is the most important. An owner's property can be set aside by the Court if it is proved that he prevents his children from obtaining a livelihood from it (s.1). But deliberate neglect to care for the

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<sup>8</sup>Makin, Butaritari, Marakei, Abaiang, Tarawa, Maiana, Abemama, Aranuka, Kuria, Nonouti, Tabiteuea, Onotoa, Nikunau, Beru, Tamana, Arorae, Orona and Nikumaroro.

owner, proven in court, by the next-of-kin could forfeit any share in the owner's property. Any dowry granted to a daughter on marriage could be returned to a parent if she is guilty of neglect or if insufficient land remains for the support of children born subsequent to the gift being made (s.4(iii)). But in Nikunau and Arorae a parent in distributing his property may see that each child, whether male or female, receives sufficient for his livelihood (s.2). If an owner dies and he has no children and no brothers and sisters then the land will be distributed to his parental next-of-kin (s.3(iii)).

Gift of nursing. A man may give his wife one land and/or one pit and a woman may do so to her husband if they are not nursed by their children, next-of-kin, or where the donor is in hospital. But in Tabiteuea all the property may be given to the spouse if the family's neglect is proved in court. A gift for nursing does not return to the donor's family (except in Tarawa) even if the recipient has no children (s.5 (iv) (v) (vi)).

Distribution where more than one spouse. Where there is no will, the estate of an owner could be divided in several ways:

(a) Where an owner has more than one spouse, the eldest son of the first spouse will be the administrator; or if there is no son by the first spouse, but only daughters, then the eldest daughter will be the administrator. A female administrator could, if she wishes, allow a son by a subsequent spouse to be administrator.

(b) The children of the first spouse will receive the best land and thereafter the estate will be shared equally between the spouses. If some of the owner's children suffer hardship from such a distribution, then the Court could distribute the land amongst the children irrespective of which spouse they are from (s.10).

(c) No distribution is made in some of the islands between the spouses (s.11) as the owner's estate is distributed amongst the children irrespective of which spouse they are from. But in Beru and Nikumaroro, if an owner has several spouses, the eldest son, irrespective from which spouse, will receive the best land and thereafter the estate will be shared equally between the spouses.

(d) Equal sharing amongst the children in an estate is only found in Makin and Butaritari. In Tamana and Arorae, sons will receive more than daughters, but the first born will receive no extra. In other islands, in the distribution of the estate between sons and daughters, the share of the eldest son will exceed that of his brothers and the shares of sons will exceed that of daughters. If there are no sons then the share of the eldest daughter will exceed those of her sisters (s.11(ii)).

(e) When an owner dies leaving no children, or no will, or his will does not conform with the Lands Code, the distribution will be made by the Court to all the owner's next-of-kin. Men and women will share equally in an issueless estate. But in Marakei, women are not entitled to any share in an issueless estate (s.11 v.a.).

(f) In the distribution of shares to the next-of-kin of an owner, the shares will be distributed first to his real brothers and sisters and second to his half-brothers and sisters, who are his next-of-kin for the properties of their common parent. The property the owner had received from his father will be inherited by the brothers and sisters of his father or their children; and the property received from his mother will be inherited by the brothers and sisters of his mother or their children.

Fishponds and fishtraps. Equal shares in fishponds and fishtraps between sons and daughters are found in some of the islands, whilst, in others, a daughter will receive fishponds and fishtraps if there are no sons of the owner, or if her parent and brother so decide. If an owner has many fishponds and traps, and a parent has made no will concerning them, the court could direct that a daughter receive a share if the sons have received their share first.

### Summary

The rule of male succession and inheritance rights to land allows little scope for women to inherit. The changes and development occurring in the Pacific today give a woman the opportunity to acquire property as an individual. Although she is able to buy and lease land she is often disadvantaged by the requirements for financial loans and security. A number of examples can be found where a husband is unemployed, with the wife as the only bread-winner in the family, and yet her employment status and her future earning capacity often fall short of loan policies as a 'fit and proper' person for financial assistance. Perhaps the qualities of responsibility, reliability, permanence, and head-of-household attaches mainly to men, even though they may have lost some of these qualifications in a family. The dictates of law and policy for loans and securities when women wish to buy or lease land are barriers which perpetuate their dependency.

To lose a life interest in a deceased husband's estate on being found guilty of fornication and adultery (Tonga) not only places a widow at the mercy of an heir, it also ignores any contribution she may have made to her husband's establishment. Any deviation or decline in moral standards cancels her rights, and whether such criteria should apply to property rights is a matter worthy of consideration.

## Women in the workforce

Women's entry into paid employment in Pacific countries and the opening up of opportunities for them to participate equally with men have significant bearings on their status as women because of the effect on child bearing, marriage and their role in the family. Although equal legal status gives women a degree of independence, the opportunity to attain this equality for full participation in the workforce is also dependent on economic and social factors. Added to this, the degree to which the subsistence economy is largely dependent on women's work, the effect on family nutrition, domestic handicraft and communal obligations could be quite significant.

For women who are dependent on the domestic industries of weaving, pottery and handicrafts for financial independence, government initiative in Fiji to provide guaranteed markets for their products has not only boosted the earning capacity of women, but has helped to preserve traditional skills that were on the verge of dying out.<sup>9</sup>

Opportunities for paid employment are greater in urban than in rural areas. For example, the 1976 selected urban and rural economic indicators for Fiji are shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Selected urban and rural economic indicators:  
employment status by sex (percentages)

Fiji	Self-employed	Govt. wage/salary	Private wage/salary	Unpaid family worker	Villager	Other	Total
<u>Urban</u>							
Males	12.2	29.5	44.0	1.8	2.3	10.0	55,048
Females	4.8	25.5	51.2	1.8	1.1	15.6	16,378
<u>Rural</u>							
Males	23.4	9.4	26.6	10.8	26.2	3.5	91,267
Females	11.2	14.5	20.5	19.2	21.6	13.1	13,096

Source: VI. *Migration, Urbanization and Development in South Pacific Countries*, ESCAP, p.41.

'One of the biggest barriers preventing women from having adequate recognition and opportunities to participate in development is the

<sup>9</sup>P.T.I. Pryor, 'Tourism now tops in Fiji', *Pacific Magazine*, 1983: 37.

acceptance of the myth that women do not work' (Ware 1981:210). The other barrier, according to Fong (quoted in Ware 1981:211), that excludes women from national development planning is that 'they are victims of old fashioned statistics'.

Women's participation in the labour force only applies to one aspect of women's participation in development. National statistics in the Pacific do not reflect women's overall contribution to the economy. One indicator for Fiji revolved around the number of chickens cared for by a woman: 'a wife who cared for nine chickens was classified as a housewife, but a wife caring for ten or more chickens was recorded as an agricultural worker' (Ware 1981:212). Although objectives in national development plans include 'assisting women to become equal partners in development' (Fiji DP8 1981-1985, vol.I:25), expected changes to improve women's participation have been minimal.

### Constitutional provisions

Under Art. 7 (e) of the Vanuatu Constitution, 'every person has a fundamental duty to himself and to his descendants: to work according to his talents in socially useful employment and, if necessary, to create for himself legitimate opportunities for such employment'. Under Art. 48 of the Papua New Guinea Constitution, 'every person has the right to freedom of choice of employment in any calling for which he has the qualifications'. According to Johnson (p.14) Papua New Guinea women 'face a number of obstacles in attaining the objective of equality of opportunity in the workforce as some pre-independence legislation which discriminates against women in employment situations still exists. But if s.55 (3) which states that "all citizens have the same rights ... irrespective of sex" is accepted then this discrimination can be overcome.' But Johnson further states that 'the scope to be given the phrase "freedom of choice of employment" remains to be tested in the courts ... being a qualified right, s.48 is subject to the terms of s.38 which ... allows very broad restrictions to be imposed.'

The rights and freedoms referred to in the constitutions can be qualified and regulated. Goldring (1978:223) states that only the 'rights to life, to freedom from cruel or inhuman treatment, and to protection of the law are expressed in absolute terms. All other rights guaranteed by the Constitution may be qualified or limited by a law' for reasons of national security, special benefit, the welfare or advancement of females, children and young persons or underprivileged groups.

### National legislation

The legislation relating to employment exempts women in the workforce from duties during pregnancy and confinement and prohibits their employment during certain hours and in certain areas.

The Employment Ordinance of Kiribati prohibits the employment of women between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. except in jobs where raw materials are subject to rapid deterioration; in emergencies of a non-recurring character; nursing and caring for the sick and other welfare work; in a cinema or theatre open to the public; in a hotel, guest-house, bar, restaurant or club; in registered pharmacies; and in managerial positions as long as a woman is not engaged in manual work (cap. 30 s.77).

The Employment Act of Fiji also prohibits women from being employed at night (8 p.m.-6 a.m.) except in cases of emergency which cannot be controlled or foreseen; in cases of treatment of raw materials subject to rapid deterioration; or where the woman holds a managerial position and is not engaged in manual work (cap.92 s.65). But under s.102, the Minister is empowered to make regulations 'further restricting the employment of women, children and young persons in specified occupations'.

The Employment Act 1978 of Papua New Guinea prohibits the employment of females from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. in any industrial undertaking unless they hold a responsible position at managerial or technical level; are employed in health and welfare services; or employed in an undertaking in which only members of the same family are employed. But in cases of emergency, the Minister may, by notice in the Gazette, suspend this.

The Kiribati Employment Ordinance prohibits women from working underground in any mine except where they hold managerial positions or are employed in health and welfare services. Although the Fiji Employment Act has the same provisions it does make allowances for those women: who, in the course of study spend a period of training in the underground parts of a mine; or who may for any other reason occasionally have to enter the underground parts of a mine for purposes of non-manual occupation. The Employment Act of Papua New Guinea prohibits females from being employed in heavy labour or underground in any mine except where a woman holds a responsible position and is not employed in manual work.

Under Papua New Guinea's Employment Act (s.97) it is an offence for 'an employer to discriminate against a female person on account of her sex'. Johnson states that, despite this provision, the sections of the Act which immediately follow it discriminate against women simply on the basis of their status as females in the guise of protective legislation. Also, within the Public Service (Public Service (Interim Arrangements) Act 1973) women, particularly married women, are discriminated against where there is 'an over-supply of persons qualified and available for appointment to the public service'. However, where a married officer is supporting a husband or family and is declared as head of the family by the Board, she may continue in her employment if the Board certifies that special circumstances exist (s.126, 127).

Johnson (pp.15-16) documents that although the

Employment Act 1978 confers benefits upon women (maternity benefits) or prohibits discriminatory practices in employment, it is limited to those situations to which the Act applies. Specifically excluded from its operation under s.3(b) are those employment situations governed by *any other law in force in the country*. Accordingly, persons employed under legislation such as the Public Service (Interim Arrangements) Act 1973, the Teaching Service Act 1971 (No.9 of 1972), the Apprenticeship Act 1967 (No.3 of 1968) or the Local Government Service Act 1971 (No.95 of 1971) cannot rely on its terms and will be governed by the particular provisions of the legislation applicable to them. The net result, in practical terms, is that the Employment Act 1978 applies to that part of the private sector which is regulated by statute. Accordingly, there will be no universally applicable legislation which prohibits discriminatory practices in employment on the basis of sex as mandated by s.55(1) of the Constitution.

It would be fair to say that Johnson's assessment in Papua New Guinea would be equally applicable to other Pacific countries, but in Constitutions (Fiji, Kiribati, Tuvalu) where discrimination because of sex has been excluded from the interpretation of 'discriminatory' would this in effect broaden the areas where discrimination solely on the grounds of sex is permitted?

### Maternity benefits

Although the various Employment Acts place restrictions on the employment of women, protective provisions in terms of maternity benefits are also included. The advantages and protection offered to pregnant female employees by maternity benefit provisions, in law, or administrative arrangements, vary from one country to another. Whereas in some countries a female employee can take advantage of maternity benefit provisions any number of times, in others, no such provisions exist, particularly in employment in the private sector where females are dependent on personal arrangements with employers for maternity leave.

In Kiribati and Solomon Islands the legal provisions regarding maternity benefits are similar and are found in the Employment Ordinance (Kiribati) and the Labour Ordinance (Solomon Islands). The Ordinances make provisions for employed women to be absent from work during the period of their confinement. An employer can grant a woman employee leave up to 12 weeks if on the production of a medical certificate it is stated that her confinement will probably take place within 6 weeks. She is not permitted to return to work during the 6 weeks following her confinement. In her absence a woman employee is entitled to be paid not less than 25 per cent of her wages.

A woman employee who is nursing a child can be granted half an hour twice a day by her employer, so that she may feed the child (this provision is also found in PNG's Employment Act, s.101). An employer cannot dismiss a woman who remains absent from work for more than a period of 12 weeks as a result of illness arising out of her pregnancy or confinement, provided that this is certified by a medical practitioner.

In Fiji, female civil servants are entitled to 42 days leave following confinement (Leave Regulations 1972 s.18). On the first three confinements, permanent and temporary female officers are granted annual leave for which they are eligible plus a further leave on full salary up to a maximum of 84 days covering the period before and after confinement. If illness arises out of confinement at the end of 84 days, she may be granted leave of absence without salary for a further period of 60 days by the head of department. Should further extension of leave be required, prior approval of the Public Service Commission must be sought.

After the first three children, female officers will be granted annual leave for which they are eligible plus a further leave without salary up to a maximum of 84 days before and after confinement.

A female worker outside the civil service is covered under the Employment Act (cap.92) which has similar provisions to the above (s.74). In addition to this she is protected under s.79 from dismissal if, at the expiration of her post-confinement period (42 days), she is unfit to work as a result of her pregnancy, provided this is certified by a medical officer, up to a maximum of three months after her post-confinement period.

Under Papua New Guinea's Employment Act 1978 provision is made where the employer, being notified of the pregnancy of the employee, can terminate the employment of the employee if she so desires without penalty. But where the employee has been employed for less than 90 days, her employment may not be terminated on the grounds of her pregnancy, without her consent (s.100 (1)). Where employment is not terminated, maternity leave may be granted where the employee has been employed for not less than 108 days within the period of 12 months or not less than 90 days within the period of 6 months, immediately preceding the granting of leave. During the period of maternity leave, the employer is barred from dismissing the employee except by mutual consent. Maternity leave extends from the period necessary for hospitalization prior to confinement for six weeks after the confinement. Where an employee is unable to return to work due to illness arising out of her confinement, she may be granted a further period of 4 weeks leave (s.100 (3 and 4)).

## Summary

Although there are a number of Pacific countries that restrict the employment of women in certain areas (mines) and during certain hours (night) the disadvantages that women suffer are not limited by law. Women's work opportunities must be assessed in the context of the cultural, economic, social and political climate in which they live.

## Marriage

As families are an integral part of our way of life the Papua New Guinea Constitution incorporates in its National Goals and Directives 'the family unit [is] to be recognized as the fundamental basis of our society, and for every step [is] to be taken to promote the moral, cultural, economic and social standing of the Melanesian family' (1.(5)).

Equality in a marriage partnership is essential in a family unit and the National Goals and Directive Principle 2(12) promotes the 'recognition of the principles that a complete relationship in marriage rests on equality of rights and duties of the partners, and that responsible parenthood is based on that equality'. The Constitution of Nauru in its preamble states that everyone is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual but these rights are subject to the rights and freedoms of others and the 'respect for his private and family life' (art.3). The Constitution of Vanuatu makes it a fundamental duty for 'a parent to support, assist and educate all his children, legitimate and illegitimate, and in particular to give them a true understanding of their fundamental rights and duties and of the national objectives and of the culture and customs of the people of Vanuatu' (art.7(h)).

Marriage is a contract of a special kind. The laws do not only include the rules for getting married but they also include matters relating to the capacity of the parties to marry, their ages, the state of their mental health and their relationship to one another.

In Papua New Guinea the 1963 Marriage Act (No.8 of 1964) makes provision for both customary and non-customary marriages. Native marriages under s.55(1) provide for a:

native ... [to] enter ... into a native customary marriage in accordance with the custom prevailing in the tribe or group of natives to which the parties to the marriage or either of them belongs.

Non-customary marriages are set out in Part IV of the Marriage Act 1963. In Solomon Islands, the Islanders Marriage Act (cap.47)

makes provision for marriages of Solomon Islanders and the Pacific Islands Civil Marriage Order 1907 makes provision for marriages for those persons classified as non-islanders. The Interpretation and General Clauses Act (s.4(1)) classifies an islander as (a) any person, whose parents are, or were members of a group, tribe or line indigenous to the Protectorate; or (b) any person at least one of whose parents or ancestors was a member of a race, group, tribe or line.

Customary marriages have been given statutory protection in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. Whereas section 55(1) of the PNG Marriage Act 1963 does not lay down the formalities of a customary marriage to be valid, there is an increasing trend for the blending of the two systems in both PNG and Solomon Islands, in that those married under custom are showing a preference for their marriage to be blessed by the church. The absorption of a customary marriage into a civil marriage situation has different consequences in the dissolution of marriage in both custom and law. Where a marriage is dissolved by custom, the parties' civil marriage continues intact unless dissolved by law. Those bound by a civil marriage are also bound by monogamy, as adultery is a matrimonial offence and a ground for divorce. What effects the conversion of a customary marriage into a civil marriage situation have on polygamy and kinship duties and obligations, and the parties' social and economic standing, or whether marriage laws do make an impact on customary marriages and obligations and erode their effectiveness and status, all need to be assessed.

With development in the Pacific islands, the rise in the numbers entering the various professions in the workforce, urbanization and out-migration, migrant labour and the changes affecting the role of women, the long-term effects on customary marriages need to be considered. The links between the emancipation of women and the permanence of the marriage institution need to be considered in relation to the patterns of casual cohabitation, having children out of wedlock, divorce, separation and elopement.

Minimum age at marriage. The minimum legal age for marriage differs between males and females in some countries, whilst in others the minimum age for both sexes is the same (Table 3.2). As marriage is an equal partnership, the philosophy behind the lower age for females to marry in some countries is not clearly understood. Whether the higher age for males entitles them to longer exposure in the educational system or whether males mature slower than females to take on family responsibilities may be some of the thinking behind the age disparities. The younger female age at marriage undoubtedly influences the length of their reproductive life-span and the greater the likelihood of larger families through both first and/or subsequent marriages. For countries concerned with the high rate of population growth this area of

law is an essential consideration not only in terms of population trends but to bring it into line with the principles of equality.

Table 3.2

Minimum age prescribed by law for marriage in  
selected countries of the Pacific

Country	Minimum age	
	Male	Female
Fiji	18	16
Western Samoa	18	16
Tonga	15	15
Kiribati	16	16
Nauru	18	16
Papua New Guinea	18	16 (Marriage Act 1963 s.9)
	16	(Court Consent s.10)
Solomon Islands	15	15 (Islanders)
	21	21 (Non-islanders)

In Fiji, the Marriage Act (cap.50) prescribes the minimum legal age at marriage as 16 years for females and 18 years for males, but with parental consent. A father's consent must be obtained first (as also in Kiribati) but in the event of his death or his being out of Fiji the mother can give consent. But if the parents are incapable or refuse to give their consent application can be made to a Commissioner or Magistrate (s.13(1) and (2)).

The stress on the role of the father is possibly linked to his being head of the household and, in cases of arranged marriages, his superior role in the arrangement of marriages of daughters. The Marriage Act is a 1969 Act and conditions have changed over the past 15 years, particularly as regards to the role of father as head of household. There is now an increasing number of females who occupy this position. As equal co-operation and participation are essential to the cohesiveness of the family, equal decisions of parents as regards marriage of a minor are crucial.

Termination of marriage

In all countries in the Pacific, the laws sanction absolute divorce and permit legal separation. Divorce is only permitted by judicial decision and only in cases of legally registered marriages. Not only do the laws sanction absolute divorce but they also sanction re-marriage where divorce or death has terminated a marriage. Divorce and re-marriage laws have little effect on the traditional attitudes and customary practices with respect to women, as standards of conduct in marriage do not depend on the state of the divorce laws but spring from social, economic,

moral and inter-personal considerations. Although divorce laws enable the empty shell of a marriage to be buried, divorce supplies the possibility of another marriage which could result in more children, or, in the case of a childless marriage, in probable children.

Divorce as a remedy for marriage breakdown gives either spouse the same rights to petition for divorce. Although there are many causes of breakdown in marital life, the remedy of divorce is based largely on matrimonial offences. However, the grounds also cover other aspects such as mental and physical disabilities which are not based on matrimonial fault.

Dual system of divorce. In Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands there is a dual system of divorce. Parties to a customary marriage must obtain a customary divorce. Where a customary marriage has been blended with a civil marriage, the dissolution of a customary marriage does not dissolve a civil marriage. The limitation in the two systems is where polygamy is recognized in the indigenous system, thus violating the total concept of a monogamous marriage. A wife in a customary union cannot reject her husband for committing adultery, but, on the other hand, this matrimonial offence entitles her to divorce if her customary marriage was converted into a civil marriage.

Johnson (p.41) states that, in Papua New Guinea, 'although most people dissolve marriages in accordance with customary practices, they have access to Village Courts which can hear divorce applications provided they arise within their jurisdiction. The magistrate mediates between the parties to reach a decision. Return of bridewealth can be awarded under s.24(3) of the Village Court Act 1973. Local Courts can only recognise and issue a certificate attesting that a pre-existing divorce has been obtained according to custom. They cannot dissolve a customary marriage under s.17 of the Local Courts Act 1963.' Parties to a non-customary marriage must obtain a divorce under the Matrimonial Causes Act 1963, Part V.

In the Solomon Islands the Islanders Divorce Act makes the provision, on where two Islanders have been married by custom and the marriage has not been registered in accordance with the Islanders Marriage Act, that the marriage may only be dissolved in accordance with custom (s.4). But where a customary marriage has been registered, the marriage can only be dissolved, annulled or judicial separation ordered by the Court.

Nullity and divorce. Legal proceedings to set aside a marriage are of two kinds: nullity proceedings where a marriage is void or voidable, and divorce. A marriage is void where either party is married to someone else and that marriage is still subsisting; the parties are within the prohibited degrees of relationship as set out under law (except Nauru and Western Samoa where marriages are

allowed within prohibited degrees of affinity, with court approval); the marriage has not been celebrated in due form; or the consent for the marriage has been obtained by duress or fraud; or at the time of the marriage one of the parties is certified insane; or is mistaken as to the identity of the other party or as to the nature of the ceremony performed; or that one of the parties is not of marriageable age. A marriage is voidable and can be set aside for mental and other medical disabilities such as if, at the time of marriage, one of the parties is a mental defective; or is suffering from venereal disease in a communicable form. A husband can have the marriage set aside if the wife is pregnant to some other man. The difficulty with this aspect of law is the interaction of customary marriages in a society which recognizes polygamy and where a customary marriage has been converted into a civil marriage situation.

The Fiji and Papua New Guinea Matrimonial Causes Act recognizes fourteen grounds for divorce; the Western Samoan Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Ordinance recognizes twelve grounds; the Kiribati Native Divorce Ordinance recognizes ten grounds; the Tongan Divorce Act recognizes six grounds; and the Nauru Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 recognizes one ground, 'the irretrievable break-down of marriage'.

The grounds for divorce are similar in most Pacific countries and they include adultery, desertion, non-consummation, cruelty (except Tonga, but cruelty can be used in defence), rape, sodomy and bestiality (except Tonga), and habitual drunkardness. In Western Samoa, a husband can obtain a divorce if the wife is a habitual drunkard for three years or more and has habitually neglected domestic duties and has rendered herself unfit to discharge them. A wife is entitled to divorce if her husband has been frequently convicted for criminal offences and has left her without reasonable means of support (except Kiribati and Tonga). In Western Samoa, a wife is entitled to divorce if her husband is convicted of any crime which carries a sentence of 7 years' imprisonment. In Fiji and Papua New Guinea, a 3-year (or more) prison sentence for an offence punishable by death or life imprisonment or a 5-year sentence and the respondent still in prison at the date of the petition are grounds for divorce. Any attempt to murder the other party or the infliction of grievous bodily harm fall within the grounds for divorce. Failure to pay maintenance throughout the entire period of two years under a court order, or under an agreement between the parties; failure to comply with a decree of restitution of conjugal rights; and the presumption of death (Fiji, Papua New Guinea) are grounds for divorce.

Mental health and physical disabilities are also grounds for divorce. Recurrent fits of epilepsy (Kiribati); unsound mind and no likelihood of recovery (Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Western Samoa); venereal disease (Kiribati); leprosy (Tonga); incapable of 'consummating the marriage by reason of structural

defect in the organs of generation which is incurable and renders complete intercourse impracticable or of some incurable mental or moral disability resulting in an invincible repugnance to sexual intercourse' (Tonga); five years separation (Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Western Samoa); marriage within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity and affinity (Kiribati); and where the temperaments of the parties are incompatible (Kiribati) are also grounds for divorce.

### Summary

Divorce laws in most Pacific countries have had several revisions over the years. In some countries the grounds for divorce have been broadened to include such aspects as incompatibility of temperaments (Kiribati) and the irretrievable breakdown of marriage (Nauru). Inroads have been made over the years to equal the position of parents. Under the present divorce laws, a husband and wife have equal footing to petition for divorce and they have equal rights to the custody of their children.

### Married women's legal capacity

In Pacific societies, where women are members of kin-groups, they acquire rights to the use of property through that group membership. The concept of *feme sole*, where a woman acting individually, if of full age and capacity, can acquire and own property, enter into legal agreements, sue and be sued and as a married woman can exercise her rights without the assistance of her husband, or kin-group, is not recognized in traditional societies. Although women do attain a role of independence within Pacific communities, that is through birth as a woman of rank; or through special skills such as a traditional healer. The natural divisions of roles and functions of both men and women in traditional societies, although unequal, are in many respects not incompatible.

### The concept of *feme sole*

The concept of *feme sole*, the individual woman functioning outside her community, is strange to traditional and group affiliations in the wide range of communities in the Pacific. A good number of Pacific women live and work in urban areas with minimal kin-group contact and obligations. They act as individuals to earn their own living, sue individually as deserted wives, divorcees, or unmarried mothers, and depending on the situation, may be the only breadwinner in the family. It is not uncommon to find a woman as head of household. As a single woman, over 21, she has full legal capacity and can make decisions for herself. As a married woman her legal capacity is in most respects *sui juris*, although she can act as a *feme sole* with respect to her own

property. In other matters, however, she is limited, under various legal provisions, to act (or not) only with reference to her husband.

(1): For example, under the Penal Code of Kiribati (cap.67 s.253 (1)):

a wife has the same remedies and redress under this Code for the protection and security of her own separate property as if such property belonged to her as *feme sole*: provided that no proceedings under this part shall be taken by any wife against her husband while they are living together as to or concerning any property claimed by her, nor while they are living apart, as to or concerning any act done by the husband while they were living together concerning property claimed by the wife, unless such property has been wrongfully taken by the husband when leaving or deserting or about to leave or desert his wife or for the purpose of giving it to a paramour.

In Fiji, the law relating to the property of married women is the Married Women's Property Act (cap.37). This 1892 Act makes provision for a married woman to acquire, hold and dispose of by will, or otherwise, any real or personal property as her separate property in the same way as if she were a *feme sole* without the intervention of any trustee (s.3).

In matters affecting her separate property she is *sui juris*, 'and her husband need not be joined with her as plaintiff or defendant or be made a party to any action brought by or taken against her ...' (s.3(2)). She is entitled to hold and dispose of her separate property which belonged to her at the time of marriage or after marriage including 'any wages, earnings, money and property gained or acquired by her in any employment, trade or occupation in which she is engaged or carries on separately from her husband or by the exercise of any literary, artistic or scientific skill' (s.4).

Although a married woman can take criminal proceedings to protect her own separate property she is prohibited from proceeding against her husband while they are living together, or apart, for any acts done by her husband concerning her property unless her property has been wrongfully taken by the husband when leaving his wife (Fiji cap.37 s.14; Kiribati cap.67 s.253(1)). A wife is liable for criminal proceedings by her husband for any act involving her husband's property in the same way as a husband is liable for acts against his wife's property (Fiji, Kiribati).

After her marriage a woman is liable to the extent of her separate property for all debts, contracts or wrongs committed before her marriage (Fiji s.15). But in certain situations a husband is liable for his wife's debts contracted before marriage

as long as he has acquired or become entitled to them (Fiji s.16). A married woman can act, without her husband, as an executrix or administratrix, alone or jointly with any other person, in the estate of any deceased person; or as a trustee alone or jointly of any property or trust and may sue or be sued, transfer any annuity, deposit, or any funds, stocks and shares, or other interest in any corporation, company, public body or society (Fiji s.21).

A married woman having separate property can be liable for the maintenance of her children, but this does not relieve her husband from any liability imposed by law to maintain their children (Fiji s.23).

The last feature which needs attention in this outline is the question covering the rights of married women who have converted or have had their customary marriage absorbed into a civil marriage. Under customary marriage a woman is subject to the traditional rules of male authority as regards her status and any property she may have brought with her; under her civil marriage status she acquires full legal capacity and can act as *feme sole*. Both systems determine and regulate her capacity and, where a wife is forced to defend her rights, the system chosen would probably be dependent upon the individual and where she would be granted the most relief. The interlocking of the two systems could have either positive or negative effects on any woman in this situation.

### Women and children

Custody and maintenance. The legal systems found in the various Pacific countries make provision for women and children to be maintained by husbands and fathers who default in their obligations to them. As the traditional heads of household, men have a legal duty to support their wives and children. A deserted wife could claim against her husband and an unmarried mother has a right of action in law for the support of the child against the child's father. Maintenance is an area of law which offers some solution to deserted and divorced wives and gives them an equal right and duty of care towards their children.

Although it is the duty of both parents to care for their children at the break-down of marriage, there continues to be confusion in practice where fathers, in traditional law and as heads of households, are not given custody of children, particularly if male. Although a Court may award custody to either parent, or some other person, a mother is usually awarded custody of young children, as it is presumed that she is the fit and proper person to care for them. The father's traditional rights towards his children, particularly where they are registered within the father's kin-group (Fiji), are affected by the Court's discretion to award custody in the best interests of the child.

The awarding of custody to one parent does not deprive the other of legal rights and responsibilities towards the child. If custody is awarded to the mother, the father's rights are not denied; for example, his consent is still required for the marriage of his child, if a minor (Fiji, Kiribati).

The statutes in the various countries determine the legal status and the responsibilities of the parents and their legitimate children and bring both spouses within the concept of equality. In cases where a customary marriage has been converted to a civil marriage, this conversion entitles a woman to equal rights as to the custody of children and to maintenance, which may not be the case in customary law.

The statutes in various Pacific countries, such as The Maintenance of Deserted Wives Act (Tonga), The Maintenance and Affiliation Act (Fiji), and the Maintenance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance (Kiribati), provide remedies for the maintenance of deserted wives and children, in that the Courts may make orders for the provision of food, accommodation or monetary assistance necessary for their care and well-being.

The last feature that needs consideration in the case of maintenance proceedings is the principle of the innocent wife. A married woman will not be awarded maintenance if it is proved that she has committed adultery, provided that her husband has not 'condoned, connived or by his wilful neglect or misconduct, conduced' her act of adultery (Fiji cap.52 s.7; Tonga cap.20 s.3).

Unmarried mothers. The legal status of illegitimate children and their parents and the recognition of the legal duty of the natural or putative father to support and maintain his illegitimate child are found in various Pacific legislation. Although the rights of the unmarried mother to the child are superior to those of the child's natural father, as a general rule, both parents have a duty to care for and maintain their child.

The laws covering the status of the unmarried mother and her child in Tonga and Fiji show a number of interesting features.

The Maintenance of Illegitimate Children Act (cap.19) (Tonga) provides for the mother of an illegitimate child, or a reputable person other than the mother, or the Minister of Police, to lay a complaint before a magistrate that any person is the father of an illegitimate child and has failed to provide for its adequate maintenance, or to pay expenses incidental to the child's birth or death. The burden in applying for an affiliation order is not solely on the mother of the child, who could feel awed by a Court process and rejected through the stigma of an illegitimate birth. A magistrate may order a reasonable sum of money for maintenance until the child attains the age of 16 years.

There is however a time limitation for the application of an affiliation order. If the complaint is made more than three years after the birth of the child, no order will be entertained unless the putative father has contributed to the child's maintenance or has cohabited with the child's mother after the birth of the child.

The situation in Fiji differs from that of Tonga in that the burden of applying to the Court for an affiliation order rests with the mother of the child, and only where the mother has died before making the complaint can an application be made in her stead by the person in whose care the child is placed (Maintenance and Affiliation Act cap.52 s.16). An unmarried mother can make a complaint before the birth of the child, or at any time within 12 months after the birth. If the putative father has before or after the birth of the child contributed to its maintenance the Court will entertain an application after 12 months. An affiliation order will cease when the child attains the age of 16 years, but if the child is in receipt of sufficient income to maintain him/herself an Order could cease on the child's attaining 13 years (s.21).

Although a mother's right is superior, her rights to custody can be challenged upon the application of a Probation or Child Welfare Officer, or putative father, if she is not a fit and proper person to have custody, or becomes of unsound mind, or is in prison, or has died (s.22). An unmarried mother can be fined or imprisoned if she neglects or deserts her child. Anyone who misapplies moneys paid under an affiliation order can also be fined or imprisoned, if the child is ill-treated, or does not receive sufficient nourishment (Sections 23 and 24).

The last feature in this area of law to be considered is the status of the child upon the subsequent marriage of the mother and the natural father. The various laws in the Pacific state that subsequent marriage will legitimate the child. However, does this principle hold good where polygamy is recognized and a man has converted his customary marriage to a civil marriage and then subsequently marries the mother of the child?

### Avenues for redress

Office of the Ombudsman. Women who suffer from discriminatory practices could address their grievances through constitutional channels to the Office of the Ombudsman (Solomon Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu) or the Ombudsman's Commission (Papua New Guinea). The constitutions of Solomon Islands, Fiji, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea provide for the office of an Ombudsman and like the judiciary it is protected from political and executive interference. For example:

in the discharge of his functions, the Ombudsman shall not be subject to the direction or control of any other person, or authority and no proceedings of the Ombudsman shall be called in question in any Court of Law (Solomon Islands art.98; Fiji art.117; see PNG's Organic Law on the Ombudsman Commission 1975, s.24).

The Ombudsman is given wide powers in the four constitutions to investigate on his own initiative, or on complaints made by individuals or bodies of persons of any injustice, or he may be invited to exercise his powers by a Minister or any member of Parliament, including the National Council of Chiefs or a Regional Council (Vanuatu).

Certain offices and certain categories of persons are precluded from investigation by the Ombudsman and these include, for example, the President of the Republic, Judicial Service Commission, the Supreme Court and other judicial bodies (Vanuatu); the Governor-General or his personal staff or the Director of Public Prosecutions or any person acting in accordance with his instructions (Solomon Islands). The Ombudsman is also precluded from investigation where an aggrieved person has not exhausted his right of appeal before a tribunal or court of law, but he may conduct an investigation if it is not reasonable to expect an aggrieved person to avail himself of the right or remedy (Fiji, Solomon Islands). The Ombudsman is also precluded from investigation if, on notice from the Prime Minister, the investigation would not be in the interests of security (Fiji, Solomon Islands).

The law in this area for Papua New Guinea is documented by Dianne Johnson. The Ombudsman Commission is empowered under s.219(1)(b) 'to investigate any defects in any law or administrative practice appearing from any such investigation; and investigate, either on its own initiative or on complaint by a person affected, any case of an alleged or suspected discriminatory practice within the meaning of the law prohibiting such practices'. He is empowered to investigate also conduct which is '(a) contrary to law; (b) unreasonable, unjust, oppressive or improperly discriminatory, whether or not it is in accordance with law or practice; or (c) based wholly or partly on improper motives; irrelevant grounds or irrelevant considerations; or (d) based wholly or partly on a mistake of law or of fact; or (e) conduct for which reasons should be given but were not' (art.219(21)).

'Clearly then, the Ombudsman Commission is a body to which women can appeal if discrimination because of their sex occurs. Although the Commission is empowered to initiate investigation into an "alleged or suspected discriminatory practice" under s.219(1)(c), in general they investigate only on complaint by a person' (Johnson p.12).

Although there are constitutional avenues in some Pacific countries where women who experience discrimination because of their sex can take individual or class action, women generally are ignorant (with the exception of a small minority) that such a resource is available for their needs. Johnson states (p.13) that in the case of Papua New Guinea 'the Commission's twin responsibilities immediately impose severe practical limitations on restricted resources .... A further restraint on the complaints procedure is the defacto requirement of exhaustion of alternative remedies. Thus a complaint may simply lapse by a process of attrition as the complainant is rejected by a series of other agencies. The net result is that one of the few potentially powerful agencies for women is seriously circumscribed in practice.'

The Law Reform Commission. So far, only Papua New Guinea and Fiji have set up a Law Reform Commission. Although grievances that concern individual women cannot be resolved through this avenue, it is an avenue where women who wish to bring about changes in legal provisions that adversely affect them could make recommendations. Johnson documents for Papua New Guinea that 'the practical implications for women seeking to rely on this body for removal of discriminatory provisions are that Law Reform Commission proposals are ultimately contingent on Government acceptance. Whilst energy, resourcefulness and creativity can be invested in suggested changes and Law Reform Commissioners persuaded to accept the merits of such proposals, the latter will be shelved in the absence of Government sponsorship.'

### Conclusion

This outline of some of the aspects of law in the Pacific affecting the legal status of women is not exhaustive, as there are other aspects of law, such as the law relating to abortion and sexual activities, the laws of inheritance, probate and administration, and laws which have relevance to the treatment of wives and dependants in times of accident or death, which should be considered in order to better assess the advantages and disadvantages for women because of their sex.

There are areas of law which affect the dignity of women that are in need of reform, such as those relating to adultery and the inequalities that exist between the sexes in citizenship and marriage laws and other areas of law where sex has made the sole difference in the treatment he/she receives.

Although there are areas of law where legal barriers have been removed, sex-based inequalities continue to persist in other strata of the decision-making process and it would need the influences of education, sociology, anthropology, nutrition and economics to bring about the necessary changes and to assess the impact of law on social patterns of the community, the family and women.

In the evolution of a distinctive Pacific standard of law making, legislation could benefit greatly from an inter-disciplinary approach which could work towards minimizing the negative effects on the community, the family, and women.

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# **WOMEN AND EDUCATION**





## 4

### Problems of women's education in Fiji

Esiteri Kamikamica

Pacific women who attended the Mid-Decade Copenhagen Follow-Up Regional Meeting in Suva, in October 1980, attempted to define the women's movement and found that, although the younger educated women were more vocal regarding the discriminatory practices against women in their nations, they agreed with the older traditional stalwarts that there is a need to develop and articulate a relevant meaningful Pacific interpretation. The traditionalists believe that, although men have always been accepted heads of Pacific families, the special role of women has always been recognized and honoured. In fact in many Pacific communities women were given the high honour of heads of tribes and kingdoms. Women first-born were as highly honoured with titles and privileges as their men counterparts. The roles of female and male complemented each other. This same Pacific understanding was reiterated and confirmed in July 1981 in Papeete when Pacific women met for the first time to decide priorities in Pacific programs that can be promoted by the South Pacific Commission and other regional agencies. Madame Flora Devantime of French Polynesia, in emphasizing the special role of women, pointed out that women in development strive to remember the past and learn from it, live the present as they plan the future. Many Pacific women claim that Western influences have degraded the special status of women in the old traditional communities. According to research conducted in Fiji by Schoeffel and Kikau (1980) the early missionaries promoted feminine modes of Pauline Christianity from middle-class Victorian England which resulted in women being domesticated and home-bound. Today Fiji women have begun to participate fully in the development of their community. There is no discrimination in formal education. The Education Act does not discriminate against females. Similarly the Act of the University of the South Pacific, the only university in Fiji, does not discriminate between male and female: 'Men and women are equally eligible for any office or appointment in the University or membership of any institution, body or committees of the University, and all Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and other distinctions or awards and all programmes and courses of study in the University shall be open to men and women alike'.

The South Pacific Social Science Association has honoured Pacific women and their effort to promote a Pacific-styled women's movement by devoting to it an entire volume of its publication, *Pacific Perspective*, Vol. II, No.2, in 1983, and titling it 'Pacific Women on the Move'. The articles contained in this volume, written by women who have been raised or are living in the region, are revealing and indicate a need for Pacific women to continue in dialogue and in interpreting development issues. All the articles reflected in one way or another the aspirations of younger educated women and the need to articulate to the members of their own communities their struggle for improved conditions for womenfolk in all developmental activities and programs.

### Geographical and historical background

According to the last census taken in 1976, females comprise 49.46 per cent of Fiji's population. The population is unevenly distributed over 102 islands.

When Abel Tasman first sighted Fiji in 1643 a feudal traditional system existed. In this early community Fijian women, besides being wives and mothers, were also craftswomen, traders, horticulturalists and fisherwomen. Female chiefly succession was permitted in the absence of a male heir and Fiji occasionally had ruling female high chiefs. After marrying, women retained personal property and membership rights in their own groups. The first missionary arrived in 1835. After 1859 planters began arriving from England. As Fijians were not willing to work for wages on the sugar and cotton plantations, Melanesians, especially Solomon Islanders, were brought in (often blackbirded) with some of their womenfolk. After the indentured labour system was introduced in 1879 to remedy the labour shortage, Indian women began to arrive from India as spouses of Fiji-born Indians. Direct descendants of these early labourers were later joined by traders and their families. Today Indian women make up about half of Fiji's female population. Apart from the two major ethnic groups, there are others such as Chinese, Europeans, Pacific islanders, etc., referred to as 'others' in the population statistics. Fiji over the last century has developed into a multi-racial and multi-religious community. Attitudes towards the education of women have changed enormously. Today there is no legal discrimination against Fijian women in education or any other area.

### Formal education

Many developing countries of the world have defined formal education as the conscious organized program by the government of the day which is used to prepare their citizens for life. In Fiji, the Western formal system was initiated by well-intentioned missionaries who came from the United Kingdom and who valued the three Rs as a useful tool for personal development. The teaching

of the alphabet and the reading of the translated Bible were closely intertwined with the early evangelical work. This remains the current emphasis of all Christian church schools. In Fiji all religious-based authorities that administer training institutions promote the language of that faith consciously in a language program, and as a result Urdu, Hindi, Fijian, Chinese and English are all taught. Each education authority or agency, religious or otherwise, determines the curriculum/syllabus content of the institution. According to the Fiji Ministry of Education Annual Report there were many educational agencies operating in Fiji in 1981 and the number and type of schools controlled by each differed (Table 4.1). The Fiji system provides six years of primary education and six to seven years of secondary education.

### Pre-school education

Most educators believe that the first six years of any child's life are very important years which lay the foundation of formal education. As a direct result of good pre-school education children perform exceptionally well when they enter the formal school system, usually between the ages of 5 and 6. In discussing the Pacific pre-schools Iole Tagoilelagi reminds us that early childhood education is not a totally modern invention; it is a natural activity which takes place in all homes. 'Pastors' schools' were set up and promoted by early missionaries for pre-school children. Tagoilelagi has also warned that 'modern education brings about crucial and dangerous changes in women's roles in the Pacific and this also affects women or mothers' attitudes concerning children'. This concern for the deterioration of home-based pre-school programs is shared by many women in the Fijian community. Through their traditional interest in child rearing, Fijian women have initiated improvements in pre-school education. Today there are 200 registered, recognized pre-school centres which accommodate about 5000 children. There are other unrecognized centres which have been created by concerned groups of women and supported by their meagre resources. These are run sometimes by self-styled pre-school teachers. Some centres are unrecognized and unregistered because they have not fulfilled the registration criteria stipulated by government. Out of the total of 250 teachers in pre-school centres, two possess a Diploma in Kindergarten Teaching (one from New Zealand and the other from Australia), and seven possess certificates in primary teaching from Nasinu Teachers' College. All three Education Officers (Kindergarten) have had specialized overseas training. There is still a great need for teachers and advisers to attend further training overseas as there is no advanced course available locally. Failing this, there should be some specialized course available locally. According to the Bureau of Statistics population estimate, at 31 December 1982 there were 34,794 children between the ages of 3 and 5. Out of these only 5000 children were in pre-school in 1983.

Table 4.1  
Types of school available in Fiji in 1981, by authority administering it

Authority	Special school	Primary	Secondary	Technical vocational	Teacher training	Total
Ministry of Education Committee	-	19	11	3	2	35
Catholic Archdiocese	-	492	70	10	-	572
Methodist Church in Fiji	-	37	14	3	1	55
Diocese of Polynesia	-	14	8	4	-	26
Seventh Day Adventist Mission	-	6	1	-	-	7
Marist Brothers	-	9	3	-	1	13
Assemblies of God Mission	-	2	1	-	-	3
Sisters of St Josephe de Cluny	-	-	1	-	-	1
Brethren Assemblies	-	2	1	-	-	3
Institute of St Gabriel Brothers	-	-	-	1	-	1
Church of Jesus Christ of LDS	-	1	-	1	-	2
Marist Sisters	-	-	-	1	-	1
Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji	-	15	6	1	-	22
Fiji Muslim League	-	13	6	-	-	19
India Sanmarga Ikya Sangam	-	19	5	-	-	24
Dakshina India Andhra Sangam	-	4	1	-	-	5
Sanatan Dharam	-	4	2	-	-	6
Gugarat Education Society	-	3	2	-	-	5
Civil Aviation Administration	-	1	-	-	-	1
Rabi Council of Leaders	-	3	1	-	-	4
Fiji Electricity Authority	-	1	-	-	-	1
International Schools Association	-	1	1	-	-	2
Pacific Harbour Development Ltd	-	1	-	-	-	1
Fiji Sugar Corporation	-	1	-	-	-	1
Emperor Gold Mining Co. Ltd	-	1	-	-	-	1
League Commercial Enterprises Limited	-	-	-	3	-	3
Pacific Commercial School Board	-	-	-	1	-	1
Fijian Affairs Board	-	-	1	-	-	1
Commercial Education Society	-	-	-	2	-	2
Tamavua Education Society	-	1	-	-	-	1
Social Welfare Department	-	-	-	1	-	1
Society for Intellectually Handicapped	2	-	-	-	-	2
Crippled Children's Society	3	-	-	-	-	3
Fiji Blind Society	1	-	-	-	-	1
YWCA/SYC Board	-	-	-	2	-	2
YMCA	-	-	-	1	-	1
Private	-	4	-	2	-	6
Rehabilitation Council	-	-	-	1	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>839</b>

Source: Ministry of Education Annual Report, 1981, p.1.

The concerned women have formed a local Pre-School Association which meets annually and has a membership of twenty-eight teachers, mothers and interested males and females. There is only one male trained pre-school teacher. The barriers and stimuli in this field will be mentioned in the concluding recommendations of this paper, as the situation is similar to that in other areas where women dare to initiate changes in the country.

#### Schools: primary and secondary

Any children whose parents can afford to send them to school can now enrol at the local primary school without any problem. Those who are neglected may miss out but there is usually a social welfare agency that can meet the need. The same applies to secondary education. The opportunities are available but the resources may be the barrier. Some funding agencies are sponsoring youngsters who cannot be supported by their parents or relatives. Co-ordination of this type of social service for the provision of basic education to every child needs to be done. Reasons for young girls dropping out of school are numerous and can be quite involved. The schools lack the services of well-trained and experienced counsellors who can ensure that everyone, including the girls, complete the formal education necessary for their future and enter the career training for which they are best suited. If one studies the Ministry of Education Annual Reports from 1971 to 1981 one notices the great increase in females attending primary and secondary schools. In 1981 there were 59,602 males enrolled for primary education and 56,716 females. There were 22,693 males enrolled for secondary and 23,150 females (see Table 4.2).

Even allowing both for the estimated 2 per cent increase in population between 1981 and 1982 and for rounding errors, there is still a substantial number of females who drop out from both the primary and secondary systems and who may end up untrained and unskilled for their community activities. These female 'drop-outs', as popularly termed, may end up entering one of the few vocational training institutions, but opportunities are limited. Only 1375 females were enrolled in vocational training school in 1981. In this same year there were 3000 more females attending technical courses than there were males. The reason for this disparity is the preferential entry of females into stenography/secretarial courses which are open to males. The problem is lack of training facilities and opportunities because there are only thirty-seven technical/vocational institutions in the entire country for the 113,982 (estimated) school leavers under the age of 19 years.

#### Post-secondary education

According to the 1982 figures, 2.8 per cent of the population or 9734 people in Fiji received post-secondary education. Of these, 40.9 per cent were women and 59.1 per cent were men. Of the women,

Table 4.2  
Students enrolled in secondary schools, 1981

Year	No. of schools	Fijians and other island races		Indians		Europeans		Chinese		Total		Grand total
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
1971	73	2,917	3,022	6,334	4,791	315	312	211	191	9,777	8,316	18,093
1980	137	9,746	10,531	13,006	12,605	436	415	184	196	23,372	23,747	47,119
1981	136	9,754	10,456	12,332	12,071	435	436	171	187	22,693	23,150	45,843
% increase or decrease 1971/81	86.3	234.4	246.0	94.7	152.0	38.4	39.7	-19.0	-2.6	132.1	178.3	153.4

Source: Ministry of Education Annual Report, 1981, p.4.

Table 4.3

Enrolment at the Fiji Institute of Technology, by type of course, race and sex

School	Course program					Race				Sex		Total
	Full-time	Sandwich	Block release	Day release	Extension class	Fijians	Indians	Europeans	Others	Male	Female	
Agricultural Engineering	-	-	122	-	46	50	100	-	18	165	3	168
Building and C/Engineering	88	-	63	43	68	92	154	-	16	252	10	262
Business Studies	-	96	-	45	558	168	433	1	97	450	249	699
Electrical Engineering	-	-	126	-	14	22	86	-	32	137	3	140
Hotel and Catering Services	108	-	-	-	-	39	35	7	27	57	51	108
General and Secretarial Studies	166	-	-	-	501	255	318	7	87	119	548	667
Maritime Studies	-	8	73	-	-	47	12	2	20	81	-	81
Mechanical Engineering	-	-	56	-	21	17	46	-	14	76	1	77
Printing	40	-	-	-	-	22	16	-	2	36	4	40
Western Division Tech. Centre	42	-	51	40	51	42	139	-	3	125	59	184
<b>Total</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>1259</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>1339</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>1498</b>	<b>928</b>	<b>2426</b>

Source: Ministry of Education Annual Report, 1981, p.7.

2597 (65.2 per cent) were economically active as were 4930 out of the 5732 (86.0 per cent) men. The opportunities appear to favour the men. Variables that influence women not to be employed need to be researched. Family commitments and traditional attitudes comprise one of the two chief factors.

A closer examination of the enrolment record by school type courses, race and sex at the Fiji Institute of Technology shows that there were 928 females as compared to 1498 males. No female was enrolled for Maritime Studies, one for Mechanical Engineering, three for Agricultural Engineering and three for Electrical Engineering. For General and Secretarial Studies 119 males enrolled compared to 548 females (Table 4.3).

One of the senior lecturers interviewed stated that island female students were denied enrolment for engineering courses because there were no women's hostels attached to the Institute. For convenience and effective training, engineering students are required to live in a hostel which at the moment only accommodates male students.

In 1973, 335 male and 190 female students enrolled as full-time degree students at the University of the South Pacific. In 1980 the figures increased to 369 and 207 respectively. In 1981, 435 males and 232 females enrolled. The total enrolment for each of these years for Fiji students increased steadily. Although the number of Fiji female students who enrolled for each of these three years has fluctuated the number of females entering university studies in Fiji has increased substantially, the main reason for this being the increase in number of female secondary students who reach university entrance level and are eligible for university study. The increase in enrolment of females at the University reflects the increased opportunities in the formal education system and the changing of traditional attitudes which had tended to deny females their rights to education. More research should be carried out in this area. The newly formed Women Graduates Association of Fiji which recently celebrated its first anniversary has stated publicly in a news release that it intends to pursue this and will circulate a questionnaire to all local graduates in order to gain useful information which should promote the interests of female graduates in Fiji.

### Special education

This program is geared mainly to the more severely handicapped children and young adults — those who have physical handicaps, hearing and visual impairments and intellectual handicaps which prevent them fitting into the regular school system. This work in special education has been supported voluntarily by the community and has yet to be fully developed. A total of only 417 children can be accommodated at the ten institutions built to cater for them. Of these, 175 are females and 242 males.

## Curriculum

Little serious work has been carried out to analyse the content of the school curriculum for sex-bias. The subject of sexism is given low priority and is not recognized as an area of concern warranting urgent attention. Local literature and relevant materials have been developed by the Ministry of Education Curriculum Development Unit. Staff of this unit has been drastically reduced recently and a new approach adopted in the school curriculum is yet to begin.

The formal education curriculum content has been recently criticized by parents and members of the community. The irrelevance of the curriculum, coupled with its rigidity, has been blamed for the current high rate of unemployment, especially among the school leavers. Displaced girls and 'drop-outs' are becoming a widespread social problem, especially in urban areas. Careful research is needed before relevant remedial vocation programs can be designed to salvage the situation.

## The ethnic formal systems

As shown in Table 4.1 there are about sixteen religious groups which run private educational institutions aided by the government. Over half of these religious authorities are Christian based or have a Christian element. The other half reflects the religious faiths of the Indian population. The two main religions of the Fiji Indians are Muslim and Hinduism. Each religious body has its own emphasis which is reflected in the school programs and curricula. All religious schools have a bias towards the original language of their own faith. Very little research has been done on their systems.

The indigenous Fijians have inherited a *vanua* ethnic traditional system. This system reflects the blood relationships of Fijians, their origins and their kinship. According to Nayacakalou (1955) Fijian natives classify their kin 'logically and relate the linguistic usages of kinship to actual'. Fijian kinship technology varies considerably with locality according to the spoken local dialect but the basic principles underlying the kinship structure vary in comparatively small degree. Each principle or value is related to a specific behavioural pattern. When one wishes to study the *vanua* system one can only do so effectively by studying the behaviours and the related principles that cause it, with specific reference to the locality chosen. Dr Nayacakalou used Tokatoka, his home locality, for his study of Fijian kinship and marriage. Young Fijian children born into such a *vanua* system, in whatever locality, will need to learn about the system and its associated behavioural patterns from their parents and elders. A Fijian adult therefore would learn the system and know how to behave as a result of actual coaching during earlier years and of

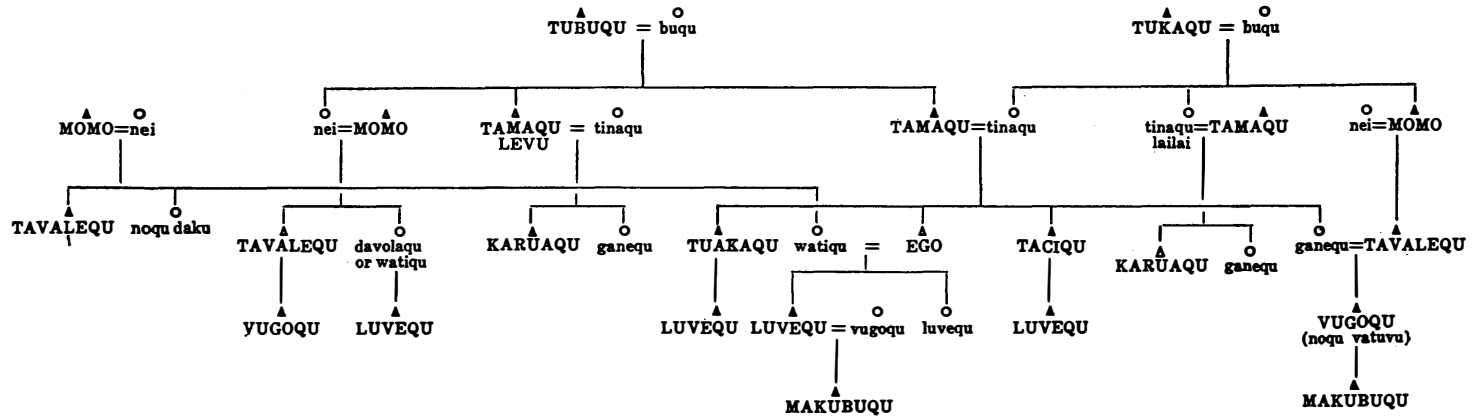


Figure 4.1 Summary of kinship terms current in Tokatoka, Fiji

Note: This genealogical table contains all the kinship terms commonly used in Tokatoka today. The standard symbols  $\Delta$  and  $\circ$  have been used, together with capitals and small letters respectively to designate males and females, and the terms are those of EGO's reference.

Source: Nayacakalou (1955, 1957).

continued application of principles. The principles are never learnt without the behavioural pattern.

This kinship system is part and parcel of the Fijian non-formal *vanua* education system. Women's position and role are viewed in a total community concept of blood relationships or 'kinship ties', as portrayed in Figure 4.1. For instance, mothers-in-law in some areas of Fiji are not allowed to talk to their daughters' husbands. In the same way brothers and sisters are not to talk to each other in public but the males are trained to be their sisters' bodyguards. Molesting of young women is an unforgivable sin and causes many fights amongst young people, even today. Many Fijian young men have been fined or imprisoned because they caused bodily harm to males who molest their sisters, cousins or relatives.

Much of the body of knowledge and associated behavioural patterns is undocumented and still part of the oral tradition. Much of it has been eroded through Western and Asian influence which promotes a contradictory capitalistic and individualistic system. The indigenous Fijian politeness, the controlled and disciplined nature, reflects the *vanua* system. The system is community and communally oriented. Communalism is a system of living in the rural villages which has been questioned and challenged by the imported educational system. The confusion that has resulted from the clash and controversy between these two systems, the Western and the communal, is of great concern to many Fijian women today. Many women are going through a difficult period of conflict and confusion within their families without being aware that the changes sweeping through the country are challenging them daily.

If Fiji is to develop a peaceful multicultural and multi-religious community then attention needs to be given and work carried out in this non-formal area. The different ethnic groups need to speak with one another in order to understand each other better, and education has a vital role to play here.

### Non-formal education

Many communities destroyed themselves and their heritage because they failed to realize and appreciate that the future cannot be planned without taking account of the inherited past. In the context of cultural flux which may be a direct result of multi-ethnic interaction between several cultural groups many people begin a search for their own identity. In Fiji's multi-cultural community many ethnic groups feel threatened by outside forces which may appear to them to be eroding or even destroying their cultural values.

The Ministry of Education introduced an adult and community education program in 1980. According to the 1981 Ministry of Education Annual Report three primary schools, namely Naitasiri Bhartiya, Dravo District and Wailotua District, began running programs for women and school leavers in craft, sewing, cooking (using locally grown vegetables and food), nutrition, health, culture (learning musical instruments and cultural songs), functional literacy and communication in homes. Knowledgeable and skilled women from the groups shared their skills with the others and the female teachers were also involved in teaching the women. The men attended the evening classes in functional literacy, human relationships and communication skills. Men and women both participated in group discussions on parental roles and responsibilities. One of the objectives of this adult education program 'is to provide parents and members of the community opportunities in educational programs so that they may be able to acquire the knowledge and necessary skills to improve the quality of family life in its varied aspects'. Lack of finance has limited the programs.

Several training workshops were planned and conducted by the sole female adult education officer in the Ministry of Education during 1982 and 1983. The 1983 workshops were carried out at divisional level, there being four administrative divisions. These were for head teachers and community leaders. One of the objectives of these workshops is to enable the participants to recognize and understand that the main thrust of community education is 'to extend the dimensions of understanding of the people about the total environment - social, economic and cultural, and on the other, to equip them with adequate knowledge and skills to solve their problems by the identification and mobilisation of existing resources'.

#### Education of women for community development

Since the productive use of human resources is the key factor in development, much more attention should be given to the key role played by women in development and relevant education programs for women's better participation should be introduced.

In January 1960, the Women's Interest Programme was introduced by the government under the direction of the Women's Interest Officer. This special program for women was introduced after much pressure and lobbying from the then existing national organizations such as the Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association (PPSEAWA), the Soqosoqo Vakamarama, The Methodist Women's Fellowship, the Roman Catholic Women's League, the Stri Sewa Sabha, the Muslim Sanana (Women's) League and the Dorcas Society.

According to an unpublished 1982 report by the Women's Interest Officer the sole objective of this section is the improvement of the standard of living in the home and the community through the following activities:

Home economics:	clothing and textiles; food and nutrition; home improvement and management; budgeting; child care
Community work:	club management; village development.
Family education	
Craft development and marketing	
Income raising activities:	pigs; poultry farming; tailoring; gardening

The aims of the Women's Interest Programmes are:

- (i) To disseminate theoretical and practical information on home economics, community work, family education, craft development and marketing and income raising activities.
- (ii) To develop, strengthen and implement an integrated non-formal education scheme for women in urban and rural areas, as one of the means of furthering adult education towards family and community betterment.
- (iii) To impart realistic home economics, community work, family education and craft development and marketing programs in rural areas for the improvement of the standards of living in the family and community.
- (iv) To promote the interests of women in partnership with existing government and voluntary agencies, village and community authorities.
- (v) To understand the needs of the people and to plan appropriate training programs to meet their needs.
- (vi) To promote the teaching of traditional craft as a means of uplifting the standard of work, reviving the art and craft involved and improving of designs and hence create a viable project for the community involved.

The Women's Interest Office coordinates mainly rural women's activities and carries out training of women's groups in urban areas if requested. Voluntary organizations such as the National Council of Women and its affiliates cater for urban and rural women. Needs of urban women are distinctly different from those of rural women.

The National Council of Women is a voluntary movement which attempts to coordinate at national level women's organizations and activities. It studies the needs of the community, especially women and children, and organizes resources for action. The Council also collects and redistributes information of use to the community. Since it was inaugurated in 1967 twenty-nine women's organizations have been affiliated to it, seven of them being national. The Council represents the non-government women's forum. In 1982 the Council initiated a social awareness, non-formal educational program for its affiliates and other women in the community who wished to participate. In 1983-84 four divisional awareness raising training workshops were held. They were financed by the Women's Unit of the World Council of Churches which plans to publish a manual on this training program.

Other government ministries that have specific programs on women are: the Ministry of Commerce and Industries, the Ministry of Co-operatives, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Youth, the Ministry of Energy, and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. Most of these ministerial programs for women have an element of training but they are not well coordinated.

The communication of innovative ideas which come with development warrants specialized training, especially in the context of the Pacific lifestyle. Relevant and appropriate techniques which take into consideration the local indigenous culture and modes of communication must be developed, created and re-created. Local values as reflected in the languages, the songs, dances, crafts etc. must be studied as part of the necessary social, cultural and economic developmental activities. Communication skills need to be developed. Specialized training for journalists, local writers and producers, musicians and dancers is important for a balanced developing community.

Before concluding this paper special mention should be made of the rural urban drift and its influence on the urban population. This has caused many unskilled women to flock to the city and many are employed in domestic duties. Such a group are victims of exploitation by developers who look for cheap labour. Many have also become entertainers. The private sector exploits these females and has not introduced the equal pay policy practised and advocated by the government.

The real issue in education, be it formal or non-formal, is the lack of female representation in the various professions. Table 4.4 shows the occupational distribution of the economically active population according to the 1976 Census Report. These statistics illustrate very clearly the lack of training opportunities offered within the last fifty years.

Table 4.4  
Distribution of total employment by sex and type of employer

	<u>Total persons</u>		<u>Males</u>		<u>Females</u>	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total economically active	175,785	100	146,315	100	29,470	100
<u>Occupational classification</u>						
Professional, technical and related workers	12,649	7	7,877	5	4,772	16
Administrative, managerial	1,656	1	1,529	1	127	*
Clerical and related workers	11,462	7	6,896	5	4,556	16
Sales workers	9,222	5	7,124	5	2,098	7
Service workers	11,429	7	6,303	4	5,126	18
Agricultural, animal husbandry and forestry workers and fishermen	76,444	43	69,549	48	6,595	22
Production and related workers, transport equipment operators and labourers	38,680	22	36,979	25	1,701	6
Workers not classifiable by occupation, unemployed	14,243	8	9,756	7	4,485	15

Source: 1976 Census Report.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this paper is to set the scene for better identification of internal and external factors providing, causing or removing opportunities, barriers and stimuli for the education of women, not only in Fiji but elsewhere in the Pacific. The recommendations below are policy oriented:

1. The Pacific islands should form a Pacific Island Women's Educational Planning Group to work on future projects and related activities.
2. Women of each country representing all sectors of the population should themselves develop a national education program and make recommendations for action.
3. The in-country activities should be determined by the women of that country, who should seriously consider the following: (i) a national need survey to identify needs and problems; (ii) that after the need survey is completed specific projects could be determined and allotted priorities; (iii) that as a result of the findings of the need survey training needs are identified and introduced with help from those invited to give it (external aid will only come by invitation of the national group); (iv) that when external help is offered a reciprocal exchange visitation program be designed and implemented in order to better prepare and expose the two parties to the sponsoring countries (aid in this way will not be one-sided).
4. The participants should seriously consider channelling the proposed activities through both the formal and the non-formal structures: (i) formal structures are existing educational institutions which may be in a position to help, e.g. USP and PTC for Fiji; (ii) non-formal structures are such bodies as the National Council for Women and Soqosoqo Vakamarama in Fiji, providing a joint forum to represent the country's multi-cultural and multi-religious population.

It is encouraging that USP and PTC are already coordinating educational activities and have elements of developmental educational programs for women. USP has training programs linked with the educational formal system of member countries and PTC has already coordinated the non-formal women adult training activities of member countries. USP has established extension or distance education programs and a satellite network through its Extension Centres.

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## 5

### Women's access to aid-sponsored training in the South Pacific

Suliana Siwatibau\*

The following features of aid in the Pacific are worth noting in a general discussion on aid:

Pacific island countries apart from Papua New Guinea have very small land areas and almost insignificant populations by world standards. All except Niue and Nauru face major problems of communication in terms of both transport and telecommunication. This makes coordination difficult and cost of most projects expensive in terms of necessary and frequent travel.

When compared to total aid to the developing world, that flowing into the Pacific is insignificant. Of the UN Development Program's total worldwide IPF program for the 1982-86 cycle, for example, less than 2 per cent was allocated for the Pacific region. Of Japan's total offshore aid only 1 per cent flows into the Pacific. Aid from the South Pacific nations of Australia and New Zealand, however, is primarily directed at their smaller Pacific neighbours. Eighty per cent of New Zealand's<sup>1</sup> bilateral aid today is directed at South Pacific nations. Australia and New Zealand total aid, however, is small compared to the total world aid to developing countries. In 1982, for example, Australia's overseas aid was only 2 per cent<sup>2</sup> of the total official assistance to all developing countries.

Nevertheless, when looked at in terms of aid per capita, the ratio for the Pacific is fairly high. The Pacific countries'

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\*The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or of the United Nations Development Program.

<sup>1</sup>*Project Profiles 1983-84, N.Z. Bilateral Aid Programme*, Government Printer, Wellington.

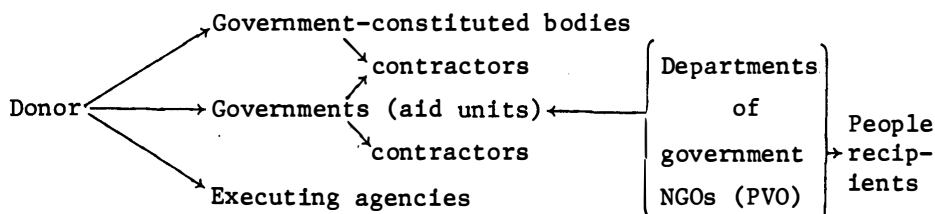
<sup>2</sup>*The Pacific ACP States and the European Community*, Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, March 1984.

isolation and the fact that most of the countries comprise many scattered islands make travel and freight extremely expensive. In addition, lack of trained manpower necessitates continued engagement of expatriate expertise as part of the delivered aid. The largest current women's project funded from the UN Voluntary Fund for the Decade of Women, for example, allocates almost 40 per cent of its finance for the salary of an international officer.

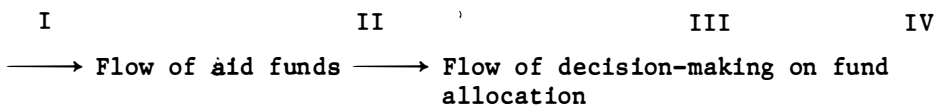
Almost all development aid is channelled through governments and government-constituted bodies. Where these bodies mete out aid for women, the bodies concerned with implementation, such as government women's offices, receive and implement aid passively. They have little if any input into formulation of projects and setting of priorities for aid.

### The aid process

Figure 5.1 summarizes very simply the process of both delivery and programming of aid as it occurs in the Pacific. All the major government aid donors in the Pacific with the exception of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) follow the process outlined. Aid agencies officially refrain from determining development priorities of countries they assist, their participation usually being restricted to the setting of priorities for the actual expenditure of aid in terms of projects.



### Levels



NGO = Non-government organizations

PVO = Private voluntary organizations

Figure 5.1 Delivering aid in the Pacific

Because the United States Government has no bilateral agreement with any Pacific government its aid funds, channelled through USAID, by-pass the government processes, going directly to non-government (NGO) or private voluntary organizations (PVO). A large number of NGOs, including church organizations, work in the Pacific. Many of these are based in developed countries and

provide additional channels of aid funds from those countries to the Pacific island states.

Most of the major aid donors recognize the importance of women in the development process and the particular roles of women in the Pacific. Some of them, notably United Nations, EEC, Australia, New Zealand and USAID consciously watch for opportunities to support specific concerns for women. Both the EEC and the New Zealand offices, for example, have clear instructions regarding aid to specifically female aspects of development. USAID also has a clearly formulated Women in Development Policy which requires implementation through incorporation of feminine concerns at all stages of project formulation, monitoring and assessment and in all sectors of development. For this purpose USAID has an office of Women in Development (WID) and WID officers in most bureaux and missions overseas.<sup>3</sup>

Although it has been argued that all aid that benefits society will benefit women as well, decades of development aid and years of indigenous development planning appear not to have substantially lifted the status of women in the overall development process. Mr S. Kibria, Executive Secretary of ESCAP, admitted as much at the 40th Regular Session of ESCAP held at Tokyo in April 1984. He stated that despite two decades of relatively sophisticated development efforts the status of women continued to be inferior to that of men almost everywhere in the Asia-Pacific region.

There are a number of ways through which aid may be directed in order to focus the benefits more directly on women.

Nature of program supported. Despite the fact that all major aid programs are directed through governments and reflect the priorities set by governments it is possible to ensure a greater benefit to women through judicious selection of programs. Large-scale, high technology projects, for example, are more likely not to involve women. Their benefits accrue to women as members of the whole society and not as a gender-specific and gender-directed process. Such projects are important inputs for national development and often enhance the role of women in the development process. For example, the provision of roads to remote areas enables women to get their goods to urban markets more easily and therefore increase their income-earning opportunities. Small-scale decentralized projects such as village water supply, home gardening and chicken rearing, on the other hand, address the feminine aspects of development directly and benefit women more specifically.

Use of resources to enhance the role of women. This involves the allocation of funds specifically to upgrade the status of women. This may be for education of women, health services to women or establishment of women's offices and so on. Most aid

<sup>3</sup>'Women in Development', Aid Policy Paper, USAID, Washington D.C., October 1982.

agencies make provision for supporting such projects. Such funding helps strengthen the very process of integration of women in development. It contributes to increasing opportunities for participation through development of women's skills and talents enabling them to deal more efficiently with the tasks they undertake for their families and their communities' livelihood.

Ensuring integration of women. Certain types of aid include objectives pertaining to the inclusion of considerations for women in the formulation and implementation of projects. The EEC for example has a checklist of conditions their aid programs must fulfil to ensure appropriate participation of women. The USAID's Women in Development officers are installed specifically for such a task.

Consultations with women. An additional means of ensuring that aid programs do benefit women equally is to consult with women's groups. The EEC attempts this with European women's groups.

Use of non-government organizations. Women, like the poor, seem to be more effectively reached through NGOs than through established government channels. For this reason, some aid agencies have explored means of channelling more funds through NGOs and positively encouraging them. The EEC, for example, will fund up to 70 per cent of the capital costs of programs through NGOs. The New Zealand Government provides a 1:1 subsidy to NGO programs overseas. However, if the programs assist women, the subsidy is increased to 3:1.

### Women as recipients of aid

Table 5.1 summarizes the allocation of funds or aid directly to women recipients, through specific women's projects, by the major non-UN donors, during their current cycle of funding.

United Nations aid to this region comes both through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and through the various international agencies operating in the region, including the International Labour Organisation (ILO), World Health Organisation (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

The UNDP itself has two core funding sources to assist countries in the region to dispense their development efforts. Direct aid to individual countries is decided upon by recipient governments via specific projects determined through consultations between the concerned governments and UNDP. Such national projects funded from set allocations, currently do not include any project designed specifically for women, though several projects are designed to include women as the ultimate beneficiaries.

Table 5.1

Provision of specific aid to women by  
major aid donors in the Pacific

Donor	Current cycle	Approximate total aid	Specific women's projects	Funding
ADAB <sup>a</sup>	1983/84 -1987/88	A\$300x10 <sup>6</sup> outside PNG	Regional projects only  Women in fisheries (2-year study) Family planning (1-year study)	\$25x10 <sup>3</sup> initially for 5 months  \$41x10 <sup>3</sup>
BDDP <sup>b</sup>	1982	£21.5x10 <sup>6</sup>	No specific projects	
EEC <sup>c</sup>	to March 1984	300x10 <sup>6</sup> ECU	A variety of small rural-based projects	
Japan	1982	US\$22.6x10 <sup>6</sup>	No specific projects	
New Zealand	1983/84 -1986/87	NZ\$75x10 <sup>6</sup>	From Head of Mission funds through 75 per cent subsidy to NGOs dealing with women; 28.34 per cent of all scholarships to women	Total funding not available
USAID <sup>d</sup>	1977-83	US\$27.1x10 <sup>6</sup>	Funding through NGOs dealing with women	Allocation not available

<sup>a</sup> Australian Development Assistance Bureau.

<sup>b</sup> British Development Division in the Pacific.

<sup>c</sup> European Economic Community.

<sup>d</sup> United States Agency for International Development.

Apart from country projects, the UNDP also funds regional projects which total some \$23 million over the current cycle (1982-86). These projects are executed by a range of agencies including international bodies such as ILO, WHO and FAO and regional bodies such as South Pacific Bureau for Economic Co-operation (SPEC) and South Pacific Commission (SPC).

An analysis of all Pacific regional UNDP projects within the current cycle shows that of the twenty-eight projects allocated over US\$100,000 each, 50 per cent involved some direct participation of women. This ranged from being recipients of improved rootcrops as subsistence farmers to being called in as consultants for handicrafts for a regional trade show.

Some UN agencies, by the very nature of their work, do deal with women substantially. Two such organizations are WHO and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA). WHO's major thrust through primary health care and community health programs and the UNFPA's projects on family health, family welfare, family life education and family planning, all address women directly. Participation of women as recipients is higher for these agencies, as demonstrated by the UNFPA's funding tabulated in Table 5.2.

Health projects have been provided specifically for women in most parts of the world because of the realization that women's health conditions are too often neglected in national health programs. Further, a multiplicity of factors including women's lower social status prevent them from utilizing official health facilities, even if available.

There is also a growing realization, among international and some national bodies dealing with women, that the disadvantaged status of women in the development process can only be redressed through formulation of programs to improve their condition and facilitate their fuller integration into the process of development. Such programs should:

- (i) enable them to be more informed so that they can contribute to decision making;
- (ii) provide them with more economic independence so that they can transcend their general dependence status; and
- (iii) create the conditions for women to become full participants at all levels of development, through deliberately arousing the conscience of the whole community.

Without specific programs to help their disadvantaged status, women will continue to be passive recipients and minor participants in the process of development.

#### Helping women participate in development

Active participation of women in the formulation and implementation of aid is as yet minimal in the Pacific. Women need to be more actively involved in directing the process of aid both through project formulation and implementation and through input into priority setting within their own countries.

Table 5.2  
UNFPA projects involving direct participation of women

	Fiji	Kiribati	Solomons	Tonga	TTPI	Tuvalu	Vanuatu	Total
	ABCD	AE	A	AE	A			
Funding (US\$)	310,159	143,241	182,548	139,931	154,500	35,653	90,588	1,002,620
Total country funds	578,759	196,505	185,508	89,946	227,680	35,653	171,920	1,585,971
Per cent for women	53.6	72.9	69.0	73.7	67.9	100	52.7	63.2

A = family health; B = family welfare; C = workers' education; D = family life education  
E = natural family planning.

Table 5.3

Nominations received since 1979 for fellowships funded under UNDP regional project funds

Field	Total nominations	Males	Females
(a) One year or more			
Civil aviation	6	6	-
Fisheries	3	3	-
Agriculture and forestry	21	19	2
(b) Short-term <sup>a</sup>			
Natural resources	55	54	1
Telecommunications	46	46	-
Civil aviation and meteorology	95	93	2
Development administration	72	70	2
Industry and commerce (including technology)	72	66	6
Others	4	4	-
Total	344	333	11

<sup>a</sup>Short-term fellowships range from 1 week to 4.8 months, with a mean of 5.2 weeks.

Several agencies in the Pacific have developed programs aimed at increasing women's active participation in development. Notable amongst these are the ILO and the SPC. Through its programs to develop women in business, women in cooperatives and its adult education program for rural women, the ILO helps develop necessary skills for women to participate actively in their countries' development. The SPC on the other hand has run educational programs for women in processes of government and of development, and trains women to become leaders and innovators in their societies.

The UNDP-funded and recently completed Manpower Planning Project had as one of its objectives 'to encourage the fuller and more effective use of the services of women in the development process'. At its completion, the project reported that it had received 'no specific request' from any Pacific government to look at the training and employment problems of women. The project reported a 'lack of enthusiasm by Pacific governments on looking at women in the labour force'.

Through its many training programs the UN system contributes to development of Third World countries by upgrading the skills of their human resources. An examination of fellowships offered by the UN systems since 1979 shows a woeful lack of women participants. These fellowships are those routed through the regional UNDP office in Suva and include most of what the UN offers to the region. Recipients are selected from nominations put up by governments.

Table 5.3 summarizes the total nominations received from governments for fellowships offered through the UNDP regional projects. Two females in thirty nominations were received for long-term fellowships of one year or longer. For the short-term training fellowships, averaging 5.2 weeks, 344 nominations were received. Only eleven of these, or 3 per cent, were women, of whom six went for training in small business skills.

Nominations for fellowships offered by Asia-Pacific regional bodies show a much higher proportion of women, who constituted 74 (25 per cent) of the total 294 nominees. This high proportion is largely due to the existence of special projects for women offered by Asia Pacific Development Centre (APDC) and Asia Pacific Centre for Women in Development (APCWD). These are summarized in Table 5.4. Nominations for fellowships offered by international organizations of wider coverage than the Asia-Pacific region are summarized in Table 5.5. This shows only 24 of the 490 nominees received since January 1979 were women, which is just slightly less than 5 per cent.

The main conclusion that can be drawn from the information outlined here is that women's participation as recipients of development aid will increase substantially only through specific

Table 5.4  
Nominations received for fellowships offered  
 through Asia-Pacific programs since 1979

Agency <sup>a</sup>	Total nominations received	Mean duration of training (in weeks)	Range in training courses	Nominees by sex	
				Males	Females
SIAP	34	11.0	3wks-6mnths	31	3
ESCAP	201	2.6	2dys-2year	179	22
APCWD	38	3.5	1-4wks	0	38
SWDCAP	4	2.0	9-13dys	4	0
APDC	17	2.2	2-4wks	6	11
Totals	294	3.7	-	220	74

<sup>a</sup>Identification of these acronyms is provided in Appendix I.

Table 5.5  
Nominations received since 1979 for fellowships  
 offered through international organizations  
 wider than Asia-Pacific

Agency <sup>a</sup>	Total nominations received	Mean duration of training (in weeks)	Range in training courses	Nominees by sex	
				Males	Females
FAO	54	7.5	1wk-9mnths	51	3
UNESCO	164	2.8	4dys-6wks	149	15
UNITAR	12	6.4	2wks-4mnths	10	2
ITC	32	2.5	1-6wks	32	0
UNCTAD	59	6.1	3dys-6mnths	57	2
UPU	22	4.2	3.5-8wks	22	0
WMO	12	3.9	4dys-10wks	12	0
UNEP	23	1.8	4dys	23	0
UNCRD	14	5.9	3.5-8wks	14	0
ABRD	4	5.5	2-8wks	4	0
IMO	11	5.4	1.5-8wks	11	0
ICAO	12	4.9	1-14wks	12	0
UNIDO	71	4.1	2dys-12wks	69	2
Totals	490	4.2	-	466	24

<sup>a</sup>Identification of these acronyms is provided in Appendix I.

programs directed at women. Several such programs have recently been developed, particularly through the UN Voluntary Fund for the Decade of Women. This latter fund currently finances the following projects in the Pacific:

Tonga	:	Improved Living for Rural Women	\$24,000	over 2 years
Fiji	:	Assistance to National Council of Women	} \$104,415	over 2 years
	:	Adult Education for Rural Women		
Palau	:	Handcraft Weaving Improvement for Export	} \$59,000	over 2 years
	:	Home-gardening		
Solomons	:	Direct assistance to YWCA (UNV)	\$25,000	over 2 years
SPC	:	Training of Women for Participation in the Development Process	\$87,000	over 2 years

The projects have not been without problems both at the formulation and at the implementation stages. Some of these problems have arisen because of lack of clear institutional arrangement for the disbursement of aid and the tenuous relationship between government and the NGOs that deal with women participants.

The lack of attention, through development aid projects, to issues affecting women, is not entirely due to lack of interest amongst Pacific governments. According to Pari Mohammadi,<sup>4</sup> women themselves do not come with well coordinated, clearly defined requirements, either to government departments or to aid agencies. Further, women's issues are usually championed by NGOs who often present opposing demands. She claimed that the provision of tremendous resources through the Fund for the Decade of Women has met with duplication of efforts, jealousies between agencies, randomness of activities, and shifts in objectives.

According to an ILO expert working with women in the Pacific, factors which contribute to the lack of women's projects include:

- (i) the fact that, in some areas, men do not take women's projects seriously;
- (ii) it is difficult to motivate women to participate in projects if they do not see results quickly;

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<sup>4</sup>'Role of women's and non-governmental organisations in enhancing the status of women', paper for ESCAP Regional Inter-governmental Preparatory Meeting, Tokyo, March 1984.

- (iii) some women's groups are too aid-dependent and therefore lose interest in projects that require their own input as part of building self-reliance;
- (iv) elite women, who are usually vocal, are often out of touch with the majority of women;
- (v) training opportunities, when available to women, are often utilized by the same individuals; there are difficulties with training women innovators, given the Pacific's cultural setting in which they have to work.

It has also been claimed that the lack of utilization of development aid by women is in some measure due to the ignorance of women's groups of both the availability of such aid and the processes for securing it.

#### Organizations and institutions

The lack of a united, well coordinated voice of women and the absence of an effective institutional structure through which programs for them may be administered have been highlighted in some countries as major reasons for the relative neglect of women's issues. Table 5.6 summarizes the more active groups working with women in most Pacific countries. The table shows only three countries with both a government office and at least one major NGO dealing with women's issues. Good coordination of NGO activities is important because it is NGOs that are in close touch with women and are usually effective implementers of programs. The presence of some government institution responsible for women's affairs on the other hand is an advantage as an available vehicle for utilizing government resources to deal with women's issues. These will include the identification of problems important to women, the formulation of projects and programs and the incorporation of these into the overall projects and programs of a country.

If aid is to be effective in uplifting the status of women in development in the long run it must utilize government institutions as well as NGOs.

#### Conclusion

This paper has shown that, apart from health projects, there is a general lack of participation by women as recipients of aid. The formulation of projects and programs specifically for women will substantially increase such participation. Special programs for women should be formulated with the help of women. Their implementation requires the existence of institutions both within and outside governments to deal effectively with women.

Table 5.6  
Organizations actively working with women

Country	Government department	NGO
Fiji	Women's Interest Office (in Ministry for Rural Development)	Soqosoqo Vakamarama National Council of Women (NCW)
Kiribati	-	AMAK
Marshalls	Ministry of Social Services	-
Other TTPI countries	-	Community Action Agency (CAC)
Solomons	Women's Affairs Office, (in Ministry of Youth, Employment and Social Development)	-
Tonga	-	Langa Fania
Tuvalu	Women's Interest Office (in Ministry of Social Services)	Tuvalu Women's Committee
Federated States of Micronesia	-	CAC
Papua New Guinea	Women's Interest Office (in Ministry of Youth, Women, Religion and Recreation)	
Palau	-	CAC
Vanuatu	Women's Affairs Office (in Department of Social Services)	NCW
Regional	SPC	Regional YWCA Office

Source: Mr Laquian, UNFPA internal paper.

Appendix IAgencies offering fellowships to Pacific countries

SIAP	Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
APCWD	Asia Pacific Centre for Women and Development
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UPU	Universal Postal Union
WMO	World Meteorological Organisation
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNCRD	UN Centre for Regional Development
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IMO	International Maritime Organisation
UNFPA	UN Fund for Population Activities
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation
SWDCAP	Social Welfare and Development Centre for Asia and the Pacific
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
APDC	Asia and the Pacific Development Centre

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# **WOMEN**

**IN THE HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY**





## 6

### Women in households in Papua New Guinea

Louise Morauta

Development goals in the countries of the South Pacific encompass women in two ways. On the one hand there are general goals towards the achievement of which women may be able to make a contribution: a focus on women's role in development. On the other hand there are goals which single women out as the main beneficiaries of development: a focus on development for and of women. This paper considers to what extent looking at women as members of households helps us to identify barriers and stimuli to achievements in both these fields.

There are several ways of analysing the situation of women in the South Pacific. We can look at women as individuals, as members of households, as members of a class, as members of women's organizations and as employees in formal structures. Which approach is most useful depends on the nature of the society concerned and on what specific policy objective is being considered. I shall look first at the nature of Papua New Guinea society and second at policy objectives for which the household is an important unit.

Academics disagree about how to define the household. While they all accept that the household is a group, some want to define it in terms of residence alone and others wish to add functional characteristics such as economic cooperation and the socialization of children to the definition. In this paper I am going to use the minimal residential definition: a household is the smallest group of people who live together. This means the group of people who occupy one residence. It is the lowest level in a hierarchy of groups which includes hamlets and villages in rural areas and neighbourhoods and suburbs in towns. While the social composition of the household is important for its functions, the definition used here does not limit the household to one particular social form such as the nuclear family.

The simple residential definition does not force us to assume that households have the same functions all over the world or even within one Pacific island nation. I shall look at the following questions for Papua New Guinea:

- how far is the household a productive unit?
- how far is the household a unit for making decisions about income, including non-productive income such as transfers?
- how far is the household a unit of consumption?
- how far is the household involved in the process of socialization?

There are other questions that could be asked but these are the most fruitful for our theme.

Some people may be worried that there is something rather 'unPacific' about looking at the household. They might argue that the household was not a traditional unit or not traditionally important or that it is a Western, imported and perhaps even decadent or undesirable social form. It is undoubtedly true that the composition and functions of households have undergone change in Papua New Guinea. In the past in most parts of the country men lived separately from their wives and children, although they shared resources more with their nuclear families than with the men with whom they lived. Today nuclear families normally live together. The growth of towns has brought other changes to the role of households. But we should not let these changes or the preoccupation of anthropologists with clans, tribes and networks blind us to the traditional importance of the household and its contemporary social base, the nuclear family. Anthropologists, geographers and economists focus very much on the household when they look at questions of production, labour supply, capital and consumption, both in the past and the present. The role of the household today in Papua New Guinea has as much to do with its historical roots as with the influence of the colonizers and the world outside.

#### The Papua New Guinean household

It is useful for this discussion to distinguish between the three sectors defined in the most recent national census of 1980: urban, rural non-village and rural village. While a rural village was defined as a collection of people living in traditional-type residential patterns, a rural non-village contained other kinds of rural populations such as those on mission stations, plantations, forestry camps and resettlement schemes. Smaller rural non-village units with fewer than 100 persons have been amalgamated with rural villages in published census tables because of difficulties in identifying them in the field and because they are often socially integrated with rural villages. Larger rural non-villages consist mainly of groups of employed men with or without their families, with social and economic characteristics somewhere between those of urban and rural village sectors.

Table 6.1 shows that Papua New Guinea's population is overwhelmingly rural and that the large majority of people live in rural villages. The urban population, although growing proportionately every year, is still only 13 per cent of the total. Only one per cent of the country-wide population are non-citizens, and almost all citizens are fully Papua New Guinean by descent.

Table 6.1  
Population of Papua New Guinea by sector, 1980

Sector	Citizens	Non-citizens	Total	Per cent of total
Rural village <sup>a</sup>	2,439,728	1,623	2,441,351	81
Rural non-village	172,782	3,463	176,245	6
Urban	365,547	27,584	393,131	13
Total	2,978,057	32,670	3,010,727	100

<sup>a</sup>Including rural non-village census units containing under 100 persons.

Source: National Census standard table A001.

Analysis of the household in Papua New Guinea is constrained by the available data. Urban surveys are adequate and usually have a reliable household variable, but there are few rural surveys. The 1980 census was the first nationwide survey with 100 per cent rural coverage. It made no attempt to define rural households as it censused people away from their dwellings. Census tables use the nuclear family unit as a proxy for the rural household. Micro-studies support the use of this proxy by showing that in many rural communities households normally contain only one married couple. Only a small proportion of the national population does not live in private households. Those who do not are to be found in the rural non-village and urban sectors in barracks, boarding schools and colleges, prisons, hospitals, hotels and ships.

In many developing countries modernization has seen a growing number of households headed by women either because of male migration from rural areas or changing marriage and family patterns in town. The 1980 census data show that there are not many households with female heads in Papua New Guinea. In the rural village sector 14 per cent of 'household' heads were female. In urban areas the proportion was only 7 per cent.

To what extent is the Papua New Guinean household a unit of production today? On the one hand it could be the dominant unit, being what economists call 'the firm', allocating its own labour, land and capital to different productive activities and taking

decisions about product mix and production techniques. On the other hand the household could have no role in production, applying its labour entirely outside the household sphere and producing no commodities or services itself. If these are the two extreme possibilities, it looks as if households in Papua New Guinea fall into two main groups closer to one or other of the two extremes. The main difference is between urban and rural village households. A useful indicator of the role of the household in production is the incidence of wage employment. Where a household member has a wage job the role of the household as a whole in production is likely to be smaller than where nobody has a job. Table 6.2 uses estimates of this indicator to suggest that around 90 per cent of rural village households are important productive units, while in urban areas the proportion is only 14 per cent. In the rural non-village sector the situation is rather similar to that in towns.

Table 6.2

Citizen households with and without wage-earners, 1980

Sector	Households with wage-earners	Households without wage-earners	All households
Rural village <sup>a</sup>			
Number	32,269	524,250	556,519
Per cent	6	94	100
Rural non-village <sup>a</sup>			
Number	20,602	7,410	28,012
Per cent	74	26	100
Urban <sup>b</sup>			
Number	49,172	7,740	56,912
Per cent	86	14	100
All sectors			
Number	102,043	539,400	641,443
Per cent	16	84	100

<sup>a</sup>Estimated from standard table H002 which gives employment status of household head. Economic activity codes 01 and 02 used to define a wage-earner (either wage job last week or on leave from a wage job).

<sup>b</sup>From special tabulations taking into account all members of the household. Census tabulation programs vary slightly and some tables give 57,074 as the number of urban households, a discrepancy which the census office has not yet resolved.

It is possible, however, that although formal employment does not impinge on the rural household's autonomy in production, other commitments do. For instance, the clan or hamlet or extended

family could be the most important productive unit. Detailed case studies do not support this idea. They emphasize that the household, homestead or nuclear family is the dominant unit, sometimes referring to the 'domestic mode' of production. A few detailed activity studies show only a small proportion of time is spent in labour outside the domestic unit (e.g. Waddell and Krinks 1968). Land ownership is, of course, in the hands of larger groups, mainly unilineal clans and lineages. However, usufructory rights are generally allocated to the smaller productive units or more general rights, such as those to hunt or fish, do not interfere with the household's productive decision-making to any great extent.

Nearly all rural households are engaged in subsistence production. The census found that 49 per cent also sell food occasionally, 48 per cent grow coffee, 21 per cent grow spices, 19 per cent sell copra, and a smaller proportion engage in commerce (National Statistical Office n.d.: Tables 14 and 15). In the subsistence sector households engage not only in the production of food, but also build houses, make canoes, engage in the construction of public amenities and produce tools and household equipment.

Many rural households with wage-earners are also engaged in agricultural production although this is unlikely to be their main form of income. Most have access to some land or river or sea and undertake food production on their own account. This is most likely where wage-earning households live on or near their own land, but it is also common among teachers, health and church staff posted away from home. There are, however, a small number of rural households engaged neither in wage labour nor production on their own account. These are the households of the elderly and the chronically ill who rely mainly on transfers from other households.

In urban areas the majority of households contain wage-earners, and 36 per cent contain more than one (Morauta 1983). Nevertheless many households with wage-earners also engage in some productive activities, whether food production for subsistence or sale, commerce or transport services. In almost no cases would non-wage income exceed wage income. Among households without wage-earners, 12 per cent have some large or small-scale business activities, 13 per cent produce and sell food and 26 per cent produce food for home consumption only. Almost half of the urban households without wage-earners have no means of support that is apparent from the census. In all, only 7 per cent of urban households are likely to be the main productive unit for their members, a sharp contrast to the rural picture. Households with members in employment in fact dominate household production in towns. A study in 1982 of urban street vendors found 78 per cent came from households with wage-earners (Walsh 1982). My own study of low-

income areas in 1982 and 1983<sup>1</sup> found wage-earning households dominated subsistence output, although production per household was slightly lower than for households without wage-earners (Morauta 1984). In all urban and rural households domestic services that include child care and food preparation are an important activity.

Production is only one element in a household's broader income strategy. While many households are not major productive units, all make decisions about how to derive income. These decisions may take into account income in the short and the long run and incorporate non-productive strategies. Decisions about where to live, who to live near and who to share a home with all play a part in the income picture. Educational, employment and migration decisions are also involved.

Another important element is the inter-household transfer, the 'gift' expected from or given to a neighbour or kinsman. Nearly all households receive and give transfers, but for some these transfers are the main source of income. In rural areas this is particularly true of the aged and infirm. In areas of high outmigration, transfers from kinsmen in town provide a major part of income to some (not necessarily needy) households. In a study of one community in the Gulf Province I found 42 per cent of non-subsistence income across all households came from transfers from outside the village. In urban areas transfers are not just important for the sick and elderly but also for the unemployed more generally. My urban study supports the indications from the census that about half of households without wage-earners (48 per cent) rely mainly on transfers. Transfers are an income strategy in that people migrate and choose where to live to optimize receipts when they are in need, lay out transfers in one period to receive in another and actively solicit transfers by making outward transfers, visiting potential donors, dropping in at meal times and asking for what they want. A transfer income strategy is not necessarily a dependence strategy. One widow in my rural study vigorously gave away about half of the good she produced so that she could receive other kinds of help and to ensure her children were fed when she herself was unwell or absent.

The household is also the major consumption unit in Papua New Guinea. Most resources available to households are consumed within them. Some people, observing transfers between households, might think that the extended family or kin network is more important than the household. However, detailed studies show transfers as a small proportion of income and accounting for only a small fraction of the resources available to the average household (Morauta 1981 on rural areas and 1984 on urban areas). Even where

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<sup>1</sup>Conducted in three settlements and one urban village in the towns of Madang and Port Moresby.

a household receives most of its income from transfers, this income is usually derived from a number of other households and is consumed almost entirely within the recipient household.

It appears that income is usually pooled within households, the extent depending mainly on the role of food in the household budget. In higher income households where non-food consumption is more important, a larger proportion of income may go to only one or two members. But most household income in Papua New Guinea is directed to food or comes in the form of food and food is largely a pooled resource. It is, therefore, the household which determines consumption patterns and to what extent it will save or make transfers. When the household is also the main producing unit production decisions influence consumption patterns and consumption preferences affect decisions about production. Household incomes more generally also influence levels and patterns of consumption. Household size, the spacing of children, water supply, housing, hygiene and food preparation all affect the quality of life of household members and are themselves household variables.

How far is the household a unit of socialization? It has been suggested that the immediate family (and hence household) is most significant in socialization for children up to the age of about 6 years (Townsend 1984). Thereafter either school or the wider community and peer groups play a larger part. However, as long as children live at home the household will contribute to the process of socialization, and at all times household members of all ages influence one another's attitudes and values. The household may have become more important than in the past in socialization in areas of town or plantation where neighbours are strangers rather than kin. This would of course be particularly true of the small urban elite but it is a characteristic of all situations where neighbourhoods are not communities.

There is something of a problem with the idea of a household as a decision-taking unit. While my account so far has stressed the shared interests of Papua New Guinean households, it has not shown that households take joint decisions. Clearly young household members do not participate in decisions about production, income and consumption directly, although their interests may be considered very important by their parents. Many observers have noted the dominance of husbands in economic decision-making within households and the use of household resources to advance the interests of men. The household approach does not mean we have to assume household democracy or equality between members. In fact such a situation seems unlikely in any society. Rather it emphasizes the areas where there is interdependence within the household unit and where the actions of some members have consequences for others.

Women in rural households

I turn now to look more closely at women and their current role in Papua New Guinean households, first in the rural village and second in the urban sector. A starting point, with bearing on production and domestic activities, is the 1980 census data on the main activities of females in the week prior to the census. Table 6.3 shows that the majority of village women (64 per cent) reported that they were mainly engaged in agricultural production. Only 6 per cent said they spent most of their time working in the house. The right-hand column in Table 6.3 enables us to see what are the distinctively male and female roles. While men and women are relatively equally involved in food marketing, subsistence food production is a more important activity for women as, of course, is home duties. Women are very unlikely to be engaged in wage-earning activity and less likely than men to be in small or large-scale business.

Table 6.3

Economic activity of female citizens 10 years and  
over in the rural village sector, 1980

Economic activity in the week prior to the census	Number of females	Per cent of females	Number of males per 100 females
Working at a wage job	6,145	1	6,261
On leave or temporarily absent from work	826	0	275
Large or small-scale business	17,776	2	191
Farming or fishing, for food and money	239,297	28	92
Farming or fishing, for subsistence only	303,645	36	79
Full-time student	66,514	8	150
Working in the house	53,187	6	6
Too old or young to work; handicapped	83,074	10	92
Other activities and looking for work	7,905	1	225
Other activities and not looking for work	65,271	8	177
Not stated	2,477	0	95
Total	846,118	100	100

Source: National census standard table Y001.

Case studies provide more information on the role of women in agriculture, emphasizing the division of tasks between men and women (reviewed in Gini 1978 and Macewan 1978). Several studies show women spending more time than men in food production. In addition, women usually spend more time than men in food preparation, care of infants and the sick, and household chores. Several case studies suggest that women are occupied for a longer part of each day than men (Allen *et al.* 1980; Waddell and Krinks 1968). Studies of children in Papua New Guinea have found that they make only a minor contribution to the household labour force (McDowell 1981). However, in most parts of the country girls contribute more to the household pool of labour than boys. This factor is something of a constraint on girls attending school, the opportunity costs for the household being higher than for boys.

Women do not appear to be as much involved as men in the rural cash economy. They are rarely employed in wage jobs or small businesses. They contribute to income from the sale of export crops and food, however, and may be particularly important in raising small amounts of money to buy supplementary food for their families. In my Gulf Province study I found that when a household ran out of tea and sugar or felt like eating rice, it was usually the women who set off on the tedious journey to market fish or crabs. She probably only brought home the price of two one-kilogram packets of sugar for a whole day's work.

If households with wage-earners and businesses are the top income stratum in rural areas, it appears that women's contributions may be more important for households at lower levels of income. Generally the poorer the household the more it will rely on subsistence food production, in which women play an important, if not the major role. Households with low cash incomes are likely to rely more on the small amounts of cash that women can earn by food marketing.

Women also play an important part in the system of inter-household transfers. Ties of kinship through women and between women neighbours are a common basis for transfers. Indeed the importance of the ties between in-laws in Papua New Guinea means people often expect to receive as much if not more through sisters and daughters as from brothers and sons. Cooperative work on a regular basis is usually more common between women than men and gives rise to transfers of produce, betel nut, snacks and so on. The greater part of inter-household transfers in rural communities are small and in kind: garden produce, fresh fish, cooked food and shared meals, all items probably more under the control of women than men. Through such transfers women are once again influential in determining the income of poorer households, in this case by giving to households other than their own.

Transfers are particularly important for households with female heads. The majority of women who are heads of rural

households are in the active age groups and engage in production of food. But transfers broaden their resource base, provide insurance in hard times and allow them to participate in the social life of their community. Older female heads of household are recognized as having particular needs and their own adult children usually support them to a great extent with transfers.

In household consumption patterns women generally share with their husbands decisions about food to be produced and purchased. But in the areas of food preparation, household hygiene and the physical care of small children, they have almost sole charge.

Men and women also share much of the work and other activities that contribute to the socialization of their children. The household is the main context in which the basic production skills of rural societies are taught. Given the division of labour between the sexes, boys normally learn these skills from their fathers and girls from their mothers, to a considerable extent through participation in the household production process. As children are taken away from these learning situations by formal schooling, and modern ideas about status are taught by agencies outside the household, this vital role of the rural household is under challenge.

#### Women in urban households

As for rural villages, a starting point for looking at women in urban households is the census material on the economic activities of women. Table 6.4 shows that almost half of urban females gave their economic activity as working in the house, with 14 per cent being in wage employment and only 5 per cent spending most of their time in food production. The comparison with men's activities shows that men are more likely than women to be engaged in all activities except housework and food production. These figures do not give a rounded picture of household activities because they focus on the main occupation of each person. Other surveys have shown that women are more often involved in trading and other informal sector activity than men, although usually on a part-time basis (Garnaut, Wright and Curtain 1977: Table 6.5; Walsh 1982). Similarly many urban residents are engaged occasionally in food production, particularly in smaller towns, on customarily owned land and on the fringes of urban settlement.

The amounts women earn outside of formal employment depend on the other resources of their households. If they have access to capital, private transport and freezers, they can make quite a good income out of trading and producing and selling ice blocks. Walsh found mean daily incomes of K7.77 for street traders of both sexes in Port Moresby. But if the households are poorer women's efforts often produce only small returns for long hours of work. In my study of low-income areas I found that the collection and

sale of empty bottles, production and sale of lime, purchase and resale of betel nut and the sale of cooked food only provided 3 per cent of all household income. Lime selling, for example, earned gross returns of K1.84 per day and the sale of cooked scones a net income of K1.15 in Madang.

Table 6.4

Economic activity of female citizens 10 years and  
over in the urban sector, 1980

Economic activity in the week prior to the census	Number of females	Per cent of females	Number of males per 100 females
Working at a wage job	13,531	13	603
On leave or temporarily absent from work	649	1	406
Large or small-scale business	700	1	416
Farming or fishing, for food and money	1,835	2	87
Farming or fishing, for subsistence only	3,419	3	70
Full-time student	17,034	17	179
Working in the house	47,200	47	1
Too old or young to work; handicapped	4,663	5	110
Other activities and looking for work	1,869	1	444
Other activities and not looking for work	9,636	9	177
Not stated	961	1	131
<b>Total</b>	<b>101,497</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>152</b>

Source: National census standard table Y001.

The exception to these limited incomes for unemployed women is to be found in food production. In my study subsistence production accounted for 14 per cent and food marketing for 3 per cent of household income. Collecting firewood is an important part of subsistence activity for women in some suburbs. In two weeks the women in twelve households at Nine Mile settlement on the outskirts of Port Moresby collected firewood worth K54 at local market prices. This figure should be compared with income of K5 from bottle collecting over the same period. In a Port Moresby settlement ideally situated for bottle collection twelve households only

earned K21 over two weeks. The skills and experience of urban women affected their urban food production. Women from swamplands where sago was the staple were reluctant or inept gardeners. Migrants from inland areas could not take advantage of swamp, sea and river foods.

The material on activities of females and my own observations suggest that women have fewer demands on their time in town than in the village. They do not produce much of the food they eat, and other tasks are made lighter by piped or tank water supplies, kerosene stoves, motor transport and building of houses with purchased materials.

Women in town are also an important influence on the pattern of inter-household transfers. Their ties with neighbours are stronger than those of their husbands who are out all day at work. Where people are able to choose, there is a tendency for women rather than men to live near their kinsmen and kinswomen. Urban settlements often contain more stranger husbands than stranger wives. The urban pattern is different in some respects from the pattern of transfers in the villages. Cash is a more important component and transfers with residents of the same settlement proportionately less so. Since men earn most of the cash and are more mobile outside their neighbourhood, it is likely that they have some independence from their wives in the allocation of transfers. Nevertheless food, shared meals and gifts of cooked food and betel nut are still frequent transfers in town. Widows and elderly mothers usually receive more than many others. The two elderly widows in my urban study both received more than half their income from transfers. However, in one case this provided a satisfactory living, while in the other the poor lady and her brood of young children were in desperate straits, never eating more than one meal a day. The difference was that the comfortable widow had four sons or sons-in-law in employment while the unhappy one had all her children below working age.

Women's contributions to household income are again relatively more important the poorer the household. While my study found that informal sector and subsistence incomes were no higher the poorer the household would have been without them, Table 6.5 shows that these types of income were more important in poorer than in other households. Transfers, on the other hand, were not only proportionately more important in poorer households, they were also absolutely larger.

In town men are more likely to bring home the food (or at least the money to buy it) than women. This of itself may mean they have more influence over consumption patterns. In addition a higher proportion of urban budgets is devoted to non-food expenditures and thus not within the woman's sole domain. In town there are more distinctively male types of expenditure: notably lunches while away at work, transport to work, alcohol and horse race

gambling. These factors incline me to think that women have less of a say in household budgeting than in rural areas.

Table 6.5  
Sources of income over a two-week period,  
1982-83, in a small sample of urban households  
in low-income urban areas

Source of income	Households with wage-earners <sup>a</sup> (income in kina)	Households without wage-earners <sup>a</sup>
Employment	2,995	91
Informal sector <sup>b</sup>	177	666
Subsistence production	264	374
Net transfers <sup>c</sup>	-153	257
Total	3,283	1,388

<sup>a</sup>Sample size of 24 households.

<sup>b</sup>Including sale of home produce.

<sup>c</sup>Inward minus outward transfers, including transfers in kind and estimates of value of meals and other hospitality.

Women's skills and knowledge in housekeeping are important for the welfare of the urban household. Two particular pieces of evidence appeared in my urban study. First, households without women appeared to get poor value for the money they spent on food, relying on take-away foods, bottled drinks, tubers roasted in the fire or boiled rice with a tin of fish or meat. Older men living on their own would often not bother to cook at all or only ate once a day. They often ate much less than they needed. Second, women's skills in food preparation affected the variety of urban diets. In turn this affected nutrition, since I found that the monotony of many households' diets restricted their intake, particularly of the main sources of calories. This was one of the reasons calorie intakes were found to be more critical than protein intakes in town. Where women knew how to cook flour and they and their families were familiar with sago, diets were more varied and calorie intakes higher. Where households relied mainly on rice and sugar, intakes were lower. Differences between ethnic groups were marked, reflecting both the rural background and the urban experiences of women in them.

Having time on their hands, urban women may be in a better position to perform their domestic and childcare tasks than their rural sisters. I was surprised to find low rates of malnutrition among 0 to 4 year olds in the low-income areas of my study. There

was little difference between the growth of children in households with and without wage-earners. I attribute this mainly to the amount of time urban women have available to care for children, breastfeeding on demand for long periods, preparing snacks when small children ask for them, being always accessible to the children, having time to take care of health and hygiene needs and frequently attending health clinics.

In socialization women in town have probably found themselves playing a larger role and having more difficult circumstances in which to do so than in the village. Many fathers are away from home during the day and there is less joint household activity. Fathers cannot pass on to sons either agricultural skills or the skills of their own employment. Women have more opportunity to teach their daughters household skills and sometimes gardening. However, the woman at home with her children in town often has a poorer social and physical environment in which to raise them. She often does not know a great deal herself about the world into which they are growing. She usually has less formal education than any but her youngest children and was herself brought up in a rural community. While the needs of her children are growing and her responsibility for socialization increasing relative to that of her husband, the urban woman's ability to meet these needs is probably deteriorating.

#### Policy objectives and women in households

There are three categories of development objective in Papua New Guinea for which the household is the main target:

- (i) economic growth objectives in so far as they rely on household production;
- (ii) income distribution and anti-poverty objectives; and
- (iii) consumption objectives, relating to living standards, health and welfare.

Here I shall consider women in households in each of these three areas, looking at the opportunities and the barriers to women in development and the development of women.

In efforts to improve the quantity or quality of household production, women are a key resource. Currently they play a large part in food production, so programs in that area must be directed to them as much as to men. Government must not forget that production decisions are made in the light of the resources of the rural household as a whole. Available data on labour suggest that at least in some parts of the country the application of more labour by women is unlikely. If more labour is required for production it should probably be sought elsewhere in the household

or through a redistribution of tasks. Improvements to returns to labour of all types for women may produce benefits in agricultural output, for instance a reduction in the time needed to fetch water. Changes in agricultural technology and skills may also be an appropriate response.

Many rural women would like to earn more money. Their main opportunity at present is through the sale of home produce. Programs that promote food marketing, especially marketing within rural areas, are likely to improve women's ability to earn money. Government can probably be most usefully involved in new production techniques, new crops, food storage technology, guidelines for food supplies to public institutions, food handling and perhaps some assistance with the physical facilities of market places.

As far as other cash-earning opportunities are concerned, women's efforts in the household at present complement those of men. There may be opportunities to develop women's contributions to household businesses. They may be the most appropriate people to train to look after household retail stores or poultry because they have other activities which keep them around their homes. Several current projects in Papua New Guinea are directed to setting women up in business separate from men and from the households of which they are part. Such projects face difficulties sometimes because they compete with the household for a woman's time and attention. It may be valuable to look further into the contributions which women can make to household-based businesses, where this kind of competition is avoided.

In urban areas the productive potential of households depends more on women than men, since it is adult female labour which is more under-utilized. This labour is a resource to be used for development. Women's contribution to household income would be improved if there were more opportunities for food production in towns. The constraints on increasing production are not labour but land, and to an extent some form of irrigation in the dry national capital. Urban residents also need help in growing food in unfamiliar environments, in trying out new crops and in developing new gardening techniques to enable cultivation of small plots over many cycles of planting and harvest. Government assistance with land and agricultural extension would be appropriate.

There may also be opportunities to promote the role of women in household businesses in towns, by providing management and technical skills. The most needed type of activity is one requiring labour but little capital. With urban women themselves, I feel the most obvious industry is food production.

Residential arrangements can affect women's participation in the urban economy. While the Papua New Guinean Government has leaned towards ethnically mixed suburbs where neighbours are strangers, the ethnically homogeneous settlement seems more

conducive to women contributing to household production. Where they feel secure among kinsmen they can more easily move outside their home and find people to look after their children. Kinswomen who are neighbours will be happier working alongside one another in gardens, on fishing and collecting trips and when gathering firewood.

Policies on income distribution and poverty are addressed primarily to households. Since women contribute much to the incomes of poorer households, programs to promote food production and marketing will help both women and poor. In urban areas the same would be true: assistance to women's production is likely to assist poor and poorer households proportionately more than others.

In household consumption objectives, women play a crucial role in nutrition and health. In rural areas they are closely involved with food production and are almost solely in charge of food preparation. All adults are deeply concerned for the health and welfare of their children. On the other hand women do not have much spare time to devote to extra household tasks nor do they often see their present patterns of food production and consumption as inadequate for their households' needs. Improving rural nutrition is, therefore, a difficult task. Resistance to government programs can occur either because villagers do not perceive the advantages of a well-conceived innovation, or because the proposed changes are too costly in the context of a household's other economic activities. Some innovations carry unacceptably high costs for households, for example, jeopardizing their basic food production pattern, or placing more demands on the most hardworked member of the household. In many cases higher cash incomes, partly earned by men, may be the best way to improve rural nutrition, rather than nutrition projects aimed at women.

In urban areas women are a more accessible resource for the improvement of nutrition. They do of course have the potential to add to household incomes, but their importance lies as much in the fact that they have time on their hands, which their rural sisters do not. They are more appropriate targets for programs on childcare and nutrition. To remedy problems of low calorie intake and monotonous urban diets, women can learn to prepare available low-cost foods in a variety of different ways.

In relation to health more generally, women could make a larger contribution than they presently do in towns. Notions of household hygiene, prevention of disease and first aid are more easily introduced in towns and are some of the basic steps in a more self-reliant approach to health care.

In the area of socialization parents in rural households continue to have the opportunity to contribute usefully to their children's development. Perhaps the most important thing for policy makers

is to recognize the household as the major agent of technical and vocational training in rural areas. Government should make every effort to support the household in this task because it is vital to have a well-trained and useful rural workforce. Rural programs should not detract from the household's role in this field, diminish the status of the skills and attitudes taught nor bias young people against this valuable type of learning.

In urban areas women have time and good will but little educational background or urban skills to offer their children, especially their sons. I agree with Townsend's suggestions about enriching the physical environment for urban children with simple playgrounds, open spaces and fuller use of community school facilities (Townsend 1984). I also support her call for pre-school education, particularly for children from disadvantaged urban areas. Perhaps there are also opportunities to improve mothers' own capacities to help their children: through school-based mother education programs, cooperative pre-schools, vigorous parental involvement in schools, or community and family services focused on the parent-child as well as the husband-wife relationship.

Thus, while looking at households does not relate to every need or every opportunity in Papua New Guinea, it is an approach which can advance our understanding of some development issues and possibly assist in improving program performance.

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# 7

## The impact of land resettlement schemes on women in Papua New Guinea

Margaret Nakikus

This paper makes a number of observations about the social and economic impact of land settlement schemes on the position of women. It is not based on direct fieldwork research; the observations are drawn from an analysis of research done on settlement schemes in recent years.

In Papua New Guinea, land schemes have proved to be an attractive field of inquiry for academics, research workers and students. Hume (1981) noted that in 1981 no fewer than 187 different works had discussed or made reference to schemes since the 1960s. However, in all this bulk of written material there is only limited information on women. The situation of settler women has rarely been recognized as one of concern. The aim of this paper is to present the little information available on conditions of women on settlement schemes in order to focus attention on this hitherto neglected group.

### Settlement schemes in Papua New Guinea

Land resettlement schemes are agricultural extension projects in which under-populated areas are opened up for productive use through the resettling of rural people away from their home areas. Since the 1950s formal government settlement schemes have been initiated with the aims of increasing the rate of economic development, boosting agricultural output, improving rural income, relieving pressure on land in areas of high population density and solving a variety of other social and political problems.

By 1981, some 7184 settlement blocks had been made available, occupying an area of 75,370 hectares of land. The total number of people settled on these blocks represents approximately 1 per cent of the nation's population. Yet the projects have enjoyed a significant share of government funds both directly and indirectly. They also engage a major portion of scarce planning and management resources.

There are four categories of land settlement schemes in Papua New Guinea:

- (i) Very low cost schemes which give land to land-short people to resettle and grow subsistence crops. In these cases the government has only bought the land, made a road or track, and told the people that they could move on to the land. Examples are Gavien and Wosera, both in the East Sepik Province.
- (ii) Small low cost schemes where the government has not been greatly involved. The people have moved often to a nearby area under the initiative of strong local leaders such as missionaries or retired police. An example is the Kiunga Scheme in Western Province.
- (iii) Medium high cost schemes such as the Cape Rodney Scheme in the Abau sub-district of Central Province. Such schemes were generally developed to encourage the planting of a single crop but not many government services were provided.
- (iv) High cost, highly planned and coordinated schemes like the Cape Hoskins Oil Palm Project on which the government spent large amounts of money for roads, schools, transport, ports and other government services.

### Ownership

Women's subordinate position in settlement schemes is clearly reflected in ownership patterns. The number of women who are sole legal owners of settlement blocks is insignificant. On most schemes, between 1 and 4 per cent of leases are held by women. Moreover, these women have only gained ownership through the death of husbands and not through the process of selection. Blocks are allocated to family units and since women are only very rarely recognized as household heads, they have not been granted leases. As a result, women settlers are left powerless and unrepresented as they have no bargaining power to lobby support for representation on settlers' committees where problems of settlers and other developmental aspects of the blocks are discussed.

### Income

Settlers on the land settlement schemes, particularly on the medium and high cost schemes, appear to have greater opportunity to earn an income than other rural dwellers. Settlers' income, particularly in Hoskins Oil Palm, is far superior to that of most other farmers and villagers in the country. The Hoskins settlers' average income over the years has been K1407 in 1976-77, K1726 in 1977-78, K2463 during the peak year of 1978-79 when prices were

high, and K701 in 1980-81 when the oil prices were very depressed. Extra income is also earned from other sources such as the sale of vegetables. It must however be pointed out that income from cash crops is the prerogative of the men. It is regarded as 'man's mani' or 'bisnis mani', even though nearly all women would have worked on the land.

For the settlers' wives, the marketing of locally grown vegetables has been their main source of income. A survey by Adamson *et al.* (1983) on economic and environmental aspects of the Hoskins Oil Palm Scheme showed that women obtained income through the sale of vegetables. The sample in the study was Kapore, the oldest subdivision that had experienced all the processes of settlement block development. A sample of 31 blocks out of 132 block holders was selected; it included Tolai, Sepik and Simbu ethnic groups and, although small, it nevertheless provided a clear picture of the situation at the time.

The study concluded that women spent a major part of their income from the sale of vegetables on store foods and other essential household goods. The sales of food at market constituted 60 per cent of total food garden production which was 24 per cent of average household income. The average annual income derived from selling food at market was K294. The World Bank (1980) estimated the total value of garden production for both consumption and sale to be K427 per family per year in 1979. Women settlers who see themselves as the traditional food providers admit that the purchase of store food is the prime incentive for marketing. Their incomes from the sale of garden produce at market are used substantially to buy food and other essential goods such as kitchen utensils.

The study found that, while most women were given some money by their husbands for food and household needs, these expenses were met predominantly from income earned by the women selling garden produce at market. On the other hand, 78 per cent of women interviewed shared their market-earned income with their husbands. Men thus retain control over their 'own' (oil palm) income and also control the income earned independently by their wives.

In Cape Rodney and Popondetta, women's control over money earned from cash crops varies depending on the individual concerned and the husband-wife relationship. But overall there is a tendency for the money from cash crops to be regarded as men's money. As in Hoskins, women in Cape Rodney and Popondetta appear to maintain only partial control over money earned from vegetable sales.

Husbands have thus acquired a monopoly of new cash income and control of family income, irrespective of who has earned it. However, even though women earn less than their husbands, the experiences of Hoskins, Cape Rodney and Popondetta would not

support an argument that their economic position is worsened by settlement. Wives are earning often more than their sisters in their home areas, and no doubt have gained a measure of economic independence as a result. It must be pointed out, however, that these women are from the medium and high cost schemes where reasonable infrastructure and other support services have been provided by the government. The situation for women on the low cost schemes would appear far worse.

In a Food Gardens and Basic Needs Survey Cox and others found in 1977 that 66 per cent of the settlers in Gavien (a low cost rubber resettlement scheme) had no regular income and only 6 per cent had food gardens large enough to feed their family. The Gavien settlement scheme in East Sepik Province was initially designed to improve the way of life of the nearby landless Grass Country (swamp dwelling) and the Middle Upper Sepik people. This has since been reorganized from a loose subsistence settlement to a cash-cropping development scheme. The new rubber project has become heavily funded by the national government. Settlers now come from many parts of East Sepik Province.

The Grass Country and Middle Upper Sepik people were not gardeners before moving to Gavien. Their survival was based on sago and fish and they were generally a very deprived population. The traditional background of the women (non-gardeners and with poor health status), coupled with lack of extension services, meant that those women had difficulty in adapting to a new role in a new environment. As a result women had been slow in entering activities which would enable them to earn an independent income. In the early phase of the project a number of women turned to prostitution as a way of earning a regular income to pay off their outstanding loans from the Development Bank. At Kiunga, the situation for women has been similarly difficult. Women from this area were also not gardeners traditionally: their staple was sago. Since the new rubber villages on the ridges were some distance from the traditional sago areas, women were having to spend all their time searching for food — either in travel to obtain sago or in the production of other foods (hunting or gardening). The increased workload left the women no time for other activities and they appear to have no source of income at all.

The Gavien experience shows how cooperation among women has been their prime resource and how the integration of different ethnic groups on settlement schemes has helped women to learn from each other. The current settlers at Gavien are more of a mixed group from all parts of the province. With the new emphasis on cash crop development, better extension services have been provided and this, combined with the women organizing projects and educating themselves, has improved the lot of women. The Grass Country and the Maprik and Wosera women now mostly earn income through the sale of food crops while the Middle and Upper Sepik women earn their income from craft. The interest in craft

has been a result of the exposure these women have had to outside traders along the river.

### Employment

Labour input into settlement blocks is often a collective effort of the family units, that is husband, wife, children and wantoks. It has been argued that labour input by women is almost double that of men because of the role they play in food production as well.

The World Bank (1980) pointed out that women provided up to 44 per cent and children 5 per cent of the oil palm labour input in 1979 in Hoskins. This did not include the labour input into food production and other household chores. Out of thirty blocks six settlers' wives performed all oil palm chores because of the old age or absence of the male block holders (Adamson *et al.* 1983).

While women contribute a substantial part of the oil palm labour, receipts for their labour go to the husbands and women receive little direct benefit for their contribution. Moreover, the income earned from oil palm is predominantly spent on male pursuits. At the same time, the time women spend on oil palm harvesting is at the expense of their own food and income earning activities (that is gardening and marketing) which contribute significantly to household welfare. Furthermore, there is a movement of labour resources between oil palm and subsistence activities in response to prices. At times of depressed oil palm prices the men withdraw themselves from oil palm activities but do not often turn to other production activities. Women, on the other hand, spend more hours on subsistence to supplement the income lost from oil palm.

Settler women are highly involved in trading. The force behind their participating is not simply consumerism but a strong desire to embrace the Western way of life which is otherwise only open to men. It helps maintain their economic status and independence within a system designed to transfer control of the household economic base to men. It also enables women to ensure the standard of living they desire for themselves and their children under circumstances in which men have achieved the economic capacity but not the economic behaviour patterns to meet these needs. Women have also begun to be involved in other employment. Adamson showed that at Kapore one woman had become a teacher, two worked part-time in making handicrafts for sale and nine other women were involved in making clothes to sell.

In Popondetta and Cape Rodney no accurate statistics on the division of labour exist but interviews and observations suggest that women do the larger part of agricultural labour,

even when husbands and wives work together. In both these schemes large numbers of male settlers are working as drivers, Aid Post Orderlies and labourers.

In these cases block development and vegetable gardening usually devolve to the wife. This is traditional in much of Papua New Guinea and major changes of attitude are required before the situation is altered. There are no women on the road, subdivisional or schemes committees, which again is not unusual for Papua New Guinea. However, Provincial Councils of Women have recently been established in the Oro and Central Provinces and women on these settlements may soon begin to present a voice.

In the Gavien settlement the Grass Country women are notable for their contribution to house building (a traditionally male task). They have commonly worked together with the men in planting and maintaining rubber and also in taking a major responsibility for crop production. The Middle and Upper Sepik women are actively engaged in craft. The Wosera and Maprik women have been gardeners by tradition and so their role has been mostly in food production. Resettlement schemes have thus given women the opportunity to participate in commercial activity but this has on the whole been within the traditional female sphere.

#### Nutrition and health

The level of health services provided to the settlers on resettlement schemes differs according to the category of the scheme. In the medium and high cost schemes settlers have access to relatively good health facilities. Critics of resettlement have argued that the schemes' emphasis on cash cropping has been detrimental to subsistence activities and to nutritional status. Lambert (1979) reported a child malnutrition rate of 51 per cent in Hoskins oil palm settlement and was very critical of the project. It has since been argued that Lambert's figures may have been misleading, as the sample was not very representative and the methodology used was questionable.

More recent research by Singleton in 1978, in which anthropometrical measurements were taken of 136 children, found that 37 per cent of the children under 5 years of age were malnourished (Singleton 1981). Each ethnic group on the blocks was represented in the sample. Singleton further noted that the rate of malnutrition was no worse than in areas from which the settlers originated.

In the same survey Singleton revealed that 29 per cent of East New Britain women had weights for heights greater than or equal to 120 per cent of the standard. Although this is cause for concern, it must be noted that East New Britain Tolais have a higher obesity rate than most other ethnic groups.

Elizabeth Cox found, in a survey of Gavien, that malnutrition rates of settler children aged 0-5 years were 10 per cent higher than when they were in their home villages. This level of malnutrition confirms the fact that these settlers, who were already extremely disadvantaged before their coming to Gavien, suffered even greater hardship in the early years of resettlement. Almost no data are available on the nutrition and health of women on settlement schemes, although visitors have remarked on the physical appearance of the settlers which indicates poor health and poor nutritional status. Cox noted in 1979 that 66.5 per cent of the settlers were recorded as being in poor health. Another survey about that time noted that 64 per cent of Gavien settlers reported inadequate food supplies, while 84 per cent claimed to have family problems from a shortage of subsistence manpower. While no hard data are available to support these claims the studies indicate that on certain schemes malnutrition may be serious not only among children but among adults, particularly women. Had women been healthy upon their arrival in Gavien, it would have been easier for them to adapt to new gardening techniques in order to produce adequate food. Many of the women were also uneducated and perhaps resistant to change.

In a nutrition study of children aged 0-5 years old in Kiunga and Tabubil, Lambert and Nakikus concluded that a village cited as a successful project (another low cost rubber scheme) was found to have a slightly higher incidence of malnutrition than the overall average figure for Kiunga. In this project people left their traditional hamlets and settled along the planned roads or tracks. The role of women as food producers, mostly in sago pounding, was made particularly hard. Their traditional sago grounds were now some 15 to 20 kilometres from the new settlements. The women had to make regular visits to these sago sites to continue the laborious processing of sago. These additional burdens on women, coupled with the fact that traditionally they were not gardeners, meant they could not contribute towards better nutrition for themselves and for the family in the same way as have women settlers in Hoskins oil palm.

With respect to other aspects of health, the prevalence of malaria is reported to be serious in most settlements. In both Popondetta and Hoskins malaria seriously affects newcomers, especially those from the Highlands. A survey carried out by Streatfield in 1978 in Hoskins oil palm settlement to investigate the problems of anaemia among settlers concluded that the incidence of anaemia was high among women. Adamson *et al.* took haemoglobin readings of fifty-four wives of labourers from the nucleus estate within the oil palm zone at Hoskins and the results indicated that 48 per cent of the women recorded less than 12/100ml, indicating that these women were anaemic. According to both Streatfield and Adamson *et al.* the high incidence of anaemia would be caused by severe malaria, hookworm infestations and poor diet. Insufficient amounts of iron in the diet of

pregnant and lactating women puts women at particular risk. Women settlers have continued to play the traditional role of food provider within their new environment. In Hoskins, oil palm women grow crops in substantial excess to daily domestic consumption needs while men's incomes have been earned and probably spent without any regard to food requirements. It has been remarked that the active role of women in food production for both consumption and sale has helped to prevent hardships among the settlers.

Table 7.1

Settlers' average income and expenditure, Kapore, 1982

<u>Household incomes</u>	Kina	Per cent
Average annual income from selling at market	297	
Average annual income from oil palm	931	
Total average annual household income	<u>1228</u>	
Selling at market as percentage of total income		24
<u>Household expenditures</u>		
Average annual expenditure at market	142	
Expenditure at market as percentage of total income		12
Average annual expenditure at store (food)	247	
Expenditure at store as percentage of total income		20
Total average annual food expenditure	<u>389</u>	
Total food expenditure as percentage of total income		32
Average annual disposable income	839	

Source: Adamson *et al.* (1983).

Tables 7.2 to 7.4 present results from a dietary recall survey conducted by Singleton in 1978 in the Hoskins oil palm settlements (Singleton 1981). Table 7.2 shows that 57 per cent of the 114 families interviewed have three meals a day while 7 per cent have only one meal a day. Tables 7.3 and 7.4 show energy and protective foods commonly featured in the diet with protein most commonly lacking. The study indicates that the only protein foods eaten in significant amounts were tinned fish and tinned meat.

Table 7.2  
Number of meals eaten per day from 24-hour  
 dietary recall

Province of origin	Number of families	Number of meals per day		
		One	Two	Three
Chimbu	28	14% (4)	46% (13)	39% (11)
Sepik	38	8% (3)	53% (20)	39% (15)
ENBP	19	5% (1)	11% (2)	84% (16)
Morobe	13	-	31% (4)	69% (9)
WNBP	11	-	18% (2)	82% (9)
Others	5	-	-	100% (5)
Total	114	7% (8)	36% (41)	57% (65)

Table 7.3  
Percentage of families consuming each food group  
 from 24-hour dietary recall

Province of origin	Number of families	Food group		
		Energy	Protein	Protective
Chimbu	28	100% (28)	46% (13)	89% (25)
Sepik	38	100% (38)	66% (25)	71% (27)
ENBP	19	100% (19)	74% (14)	100% (19)
Morobe	13	100% (13)	46% (6)	77% (10)
WNBP	11	100% (11)	55% (6)	100% (11)
Others	5	100% (5)	60% (3)	100% (5)
Total	114	100%(114)	59% (67)	85% (97)

Although most of the foods eaten come from the settlers' gardens, purchased food was commonly in settlers' diets, as might be expected from their relatively high income. The most commonly purchased store foods were rice, tinned fish and tinned meat, sugar and tea. The only food bought from the market was dry coconut. It is clear that the local foods sold at the market were largely supplied by the women from the oil palm area, while the local people sold only betelnut and coconuts. A survey done in 1977 of the markets in the oil palm area also showed this.

Table 7.4

Percentage of families consuming purchased foods  
(excluding beverages and sugar), from 24-hour dietary recall

Province of origin	Number of families	Type of food		
		Coconuts only	Coconuts and/or other foods	Total
Chimbu	28	32% (9)	43% (12)	75% (21)
Sepik	38	3% (1)	79% (30)	82% (31)
ENBP	19	5% (1)	84% (16)	89% (17)
Morobe	13	23% (3)	62% (8)	85% (11)
WNBP	11	18% (2)	73% (8)	91% (10)
Others	5	-	80% (4)	80% (4)
Total	114	13% (15)	60% (79)	82% (94)

One of the common complaints among settlers is the lack of useable water supply. In Popondetta it seems that gastroenteritis is a major problem and it has been suggested by health authorities that this may be due to unhygienic water. Most settlers own water tanks, but during the dry season they turn to creeks, which if analysed would be unfit for human consumption. In Gavien, Warakai recorded that 76 per cent of settlers reported problems with their water supply. Women settlers have to walk a long way to fetch drinking water in Kiunga, as the settlements are on ridge tops.

Housing is another area of health concern, particularly in low cost schemes where most settlers have substandard tin roofed sheds with detached kitchens all constructed in bush materials. In Gavien, 74 per cent of settlers are living in houses inferior to those found in their home villages.

### Education

Children of settlers would generally have better access to community school facilities than the children in villages. As a result settlers often bring children of relatives with them.

School enrolment, for example, in Hoskins oil palm settlement in 1982 was 82 per cent of the children aged 7-12 years old with an attendance rate of 86.9 per cent, the highest in the province. The national figure for enrolment of children in this age group is 61 per cent. It is however interesting to note that in Hoskins High School there is a greater imbalance in enrolment by sex than the national average. In 1982 at Hoskins there was a one girl to five boys ratio, compared with a 1 to 3 ratio nationally.

The precise reason for this is not known, but one can assume that traditional attitudes towards female roles, compounded by the need for labour on the blocks, persuaded parents to keep their daughters at home. The distance between the blocks and Hoskins High School is long and children have to walk every day. Parents may be concerned for their daughters' safety, reinforcing the decision that girls should not continue their education.

In Kiunga, the resettlement was near a number of schools which meant that settlers' children were able to go to school for the first time. Daily attendance at school presents some conflicts with traditional routine whereby children, especially girls, are expected to assist their parents in food gathering. This conflict is reflected in three ways. First the enrolment of girls at schools is far less than that of the boys. Only 29 per cent of the total enrolment were girls in 1976; this figure fell from a level of 36 per cent at Grade 1 to 22 per cent at Grade 6. Girls are frequently withdrawn from school to assist with the collection of sago.

In Gavien, by virtue of the missions' good will a resource centre was set up on the Bagi (Bagi is part of the scheme) to develop and prepare settlers for self-reliance. The resource centre offers a full range of social and extension services geared to serve the family needs (agriculture activities, health, nutrition, vocational schools, sewing classes, housing), and has had a major impact in increasing women's involvement and improving their position.

Most often extension services provided are geared towards men. In Gavien for example a four-week orientation course which was scheduled for all settlers when they first come to Gavien — the course addressed the issues of agriculture, housing, health and nutrition, family planning, appropriate technology — never involved women. Generally this is true throughout the country. All agricultural extension programs are directed towards the men even though the women do the bulk of the agricultural work.

### Other social problems

The experience of land resettlement schemes has shown that, as the income opportunities of settlers' improve, alcohol problems also increase. In Hoskins the proportion of income devoted to luxuries such as alcoholic beverages, especially beer, is high. This is part of a nation-wide problem of much concern to authorities and to the families concerned. One of the settlers' wives' common complaints is about their errant husbands squandering their income on beer rather than spending it on the family. Adamson *et al.* found that alcohol consumption was particularly high amongst the employees of the estate, especially after pay day. Male settlers spend only a small amount of total cash

crop earnings on food, yet most purchased beer at a rate of at least one carton per month. With the price of a carton of beer at K12.40, this means that each settler easily spends K149 on beer per annum. This was 16 per cent of the average 1982 income from oil palm. Many would possibly spend even more than this on alcohol.

A study currently being undertaken on domestic violence in Papua New Guinea shows that the consumption of alcohol often results in wife beating and abuse. While there are no data on this for settlements, it is reasonable to assume that the situation is no different.

### Conclusion

Settlement projects in Papua New Guinea have not on the whole been carefully planned. Even where schemes have received attention from planners, there has been a tendency to concentrate on economic, financial and infrastructural aspects and to ignore sociological aspects. Planning has been left to agricultural economists and financial analysts who have concentrated on issues such as crop selection and economic cost-benefit analysis, and have failed to consider land settlement from the settler's perspective.

Planners of schemes often appear to believe they have catered for the human aspects of settlement by constructing schools, aid posts and sports fields. Little attention has been paid to overall family welfare, nor indeed to the design of a system of incentives that will encourage settlers to attain production targets. The failure of planners to appreciate the rational decision-making processes of small farmers, and the crucial role women play in both agricultural production and family, have been a feature of most projects and a major reason for problems encountered.

The amount of planning done largely depends on the type of scheme being considered. For the low cost schemes minimal planning for services is provided. The government simply purchased the land, put in a road or track and the people moved on to the land as an exercise of 'self-reliance'. Substantial planning has occurred only for medium and high cost projects. At least in the medium cost the planning involves provision of basic services while the high cost schemes are highly planned and coordinated. The difference in the level of planning and government assistance is clearly demonstrated by the relative services of the high cost projects and conversely by the difficulties experienced on the low cost projects. The benefits to settlers, and particularly to women, between the different types of scheme vary enormously.

In many respects the Gavien scheme in its initial phase failed to meet the basic needs of the settlers. No roads, health or educational services were provided, and very little direct assistance given to the settlers by Agricultural Officers. Yet the settlers on these blocks were swamp dwelling people who, until then, had survived on sago and fish. Gavien was a totally new environment where their survival would be dependent on food gardening. Planning took no account of the assistance required to help these settlers adapt to a new environment. Cox showed conclusively that, as a result, the families on these schemes were worse off nutritionally and socially than they had been in their home villages.

While the record at Hoskins, for example, is not so grim, the lessons for the future are clear. Planners must take account not only of the social needs of women and families in planning schemes, but also of the economic role women play. Until the labour of women is recognized and rewarded, women will continue to occupy a subordinate position on settlement schemes.

The paper began by noting the lack of information on women settlers. The scanty data which do exist indicate that women have not benefited as much as men from settlement schemes. It is important that future research on settlement projects focuses on the particular situation of women as well as on more general issues, so that progressive remedial action may be suggested to policy makers.

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## 8

### Producers or consumers? Women's entry into the cash economy in Madang, Papua New Guinea

Stephanie Fahey

Most women within the Pacific region are involved in the cash economy, but their involvement more often than not is in the capacity of consumer rather than producer. A number of barriers limit women's involvement in production in the cash economy. The underlying problem appears to be the acceptance of the sexual division of labour in which females perform mainly non-productive labour in the home and males perform largely productive labour outside the home. Preconditions for this pattern of labour division were set by the pre-colonial society but since then the division has become more pronounced. In many cases, the female role in the cash economy is one of consumer and unrecompensed producer and, as such, women's dependence on men is increasing.

This paper is concerned with both the origins and consequences of low female participation in the cash economy in the Madang region. The areas covered in the study are some of the peri-urban villages of Madang town (Siar, Yabob and Bilibil villages), Takia (southern half of Karkar Island) and Bagabag Island (Figure 8.1). Before colonization people from these areas shared a common language<sup>1</sup> and a similar socio-economic system. Over the past 100 years dramatic changes have taken place which have resulted in regional uneven development. Each area within the region is located at different distances from the regional centre of exchange, Madang town, and each area possesses a different resource base which fosters a specific type of economic development.

Peri-urban villagers have lost much of their land to the town and copra/cocoa plantations. The people are in a position where they are dependent predominantly on wage incomes for support. In Takia, the loss of land to plantations was not as

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<sup>1</sup>The people of the region belong to the Austronesian language group of the Siasi family, Belan sub-family and the sub-categories of Gedaged and Bilibil (Z'graggen 1975:40-1).

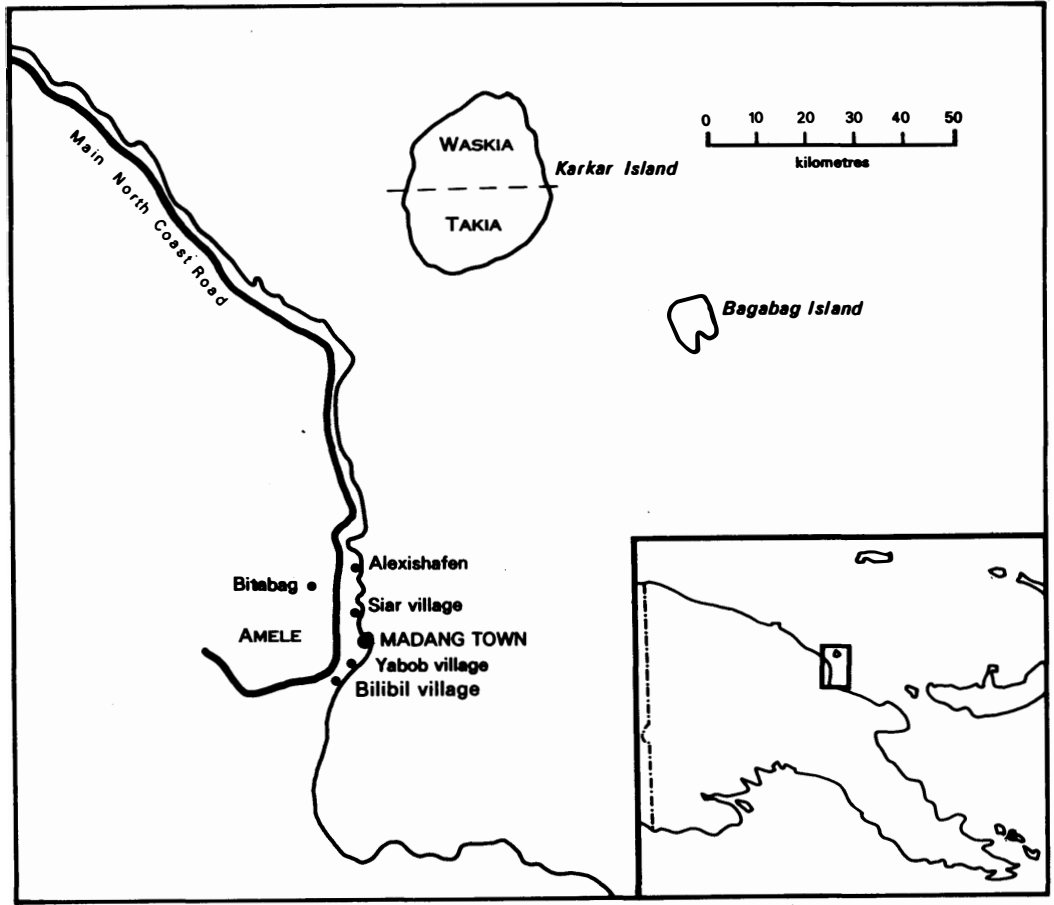


Figure 8.1 The Madang region

severe. People are deeply involved in smallholder copra and cocoa production. In contrast, Bagabag Island is small (35 km<sup>2</sup>), mountainous and located a long distance (60 km) from Madang town. Consequently, people's involvement in cash crop production is limited and they either oscillate between subsistence and cash crop production or migrate. Part of the island's revenue is generated from cargo boats which service Karkar Island and the north coast from Madang town. The problems which face women in these three areas must be seen within the context of economic opportunity.

The problems experienced by women in the Madang region vary from those experienced by women in other regions in Papua New Guinea. Differences arise from various pre-colonial socio-economic systems, forms of colonial contact and resource bases. Moreover, the individual problems experienced by women vary not only with the area in which they live but also according to their age, marital status and the class position of the household.

The problems facing women in the Madang region will be discussed in three sections: the precedents set by the pre-colonial socio-economic system, the problems arising during the colonial period, and the contemporary barriers inherited from both the pre-colonial and colonial periods. It will be shown that within the pre-colonial society women were involved in essential productive activities (e.g. gardening) as well as reproductive activities (e.g. routine cooking and child care). During the colonial period new forms of production (e.g. wage labour and smallholder production) were introduced. Embodied within the new production system were predetermined sex roles which militated against female participation. Colonial sex roles were superimposed on pre-colonial sex roles to create a situation in which many females are now dependent on males and indirectly upon capital for their survival. It will be emphasized that the problems women face in their entry to the cash economy have a long history and cannot be changed quickly or by the introduction of a few general policies intended to change the individual's attitude. The reasons for women's exclusion from the cash economy are not only attitudinal but are related to the form and the degree to which economic development has been fostered.

#### Precedents set by the pre-colonial society

Pre-colonial villages within the Madang region were based on shifting agriculture and pig husbandry, supplemented by hunting and gathering, fishing and trade. Some activities were marked by a rigid sexual division of labour while others were performed by either sex. Gardening in most areas was the most important productive activity.<sup>2</sup> Briefly, the sexual division of labour in

<sup>2</sup>In Yabob and Bilibil villages it is believed that making and trading cooking and water-carrying pots in exchange for food was also a major form of production.

gardening was as follows. Men were responsible for the clearance of primary and secondary bush and the construction and maintenance of protective fences. The major tasks for women were weeding and daily maintenance, harvesting and carrying food to a storage hut or back to the village. Who planted crops varied with the crop — for example, different stages of planting yams were carried out by men and women separately but women planted most other crops, for example taro, bananas and other varieties of plants (Table 8.1).

Female labour was essential to food production and women could attain a certain degree of status from their gardening skills. However, gardening in the main was controlled by men. They were the major landholders, and they decided on the location and when the new garden was to be planted. Men also performed garden magic and thus the success of the garden was attributed to the strength of their magic.

Although women were major contributors to subsistence production men were the managers and women were the managed. The relationship between men and women in subsistence production has continued within the new forms of production. Meat, a highly valued form of food, was in most cases controlled by men. Pigs were owned by men, although the feeding of pigs was the responsibility of women. Men were almost exclusively concerned with hunting, deep sea fishing and turtle hunts. Women collected crabs, oysters and a variety of shell fish from the reef. They also fished on the reef and in estuaries. Men controlled the distribution and subsequent consumption of meat, and it appears from oral history that they were the major consumers.

The primary tasks of women were connected with the home in the provision of food and child care. The collection of food, firewood, water and materials for artefact production was primarily the responsibility of women. Females were responsible for the routine cooking and child care. Women were trained in the 'caring' role for both men and children from a very early age. Girls were expected to care for the younger children, gather and carry food, and go on various errands, while boys enjoyed a great deal of independence.<sup>3</sup>

Contact with other regions was maintained mainly by men through long distance trading expeditions. Women were allowed to participate only in local trading with neighbouring groups. Village people state that the reason long distance trade was restricted to men (even though in many cases women produced the trading items, for example, Yabob and Bilibil pots) was because military protection was necessary. That aside, women's exclusion

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<sup>3</sup>The lower labour input of young single men in subsistence agriculture allowed them to become migrant labourers without causing much disruption to the village productive system.

Table 8.1  
Pre-contact sexual division of labour in Siar village

Labour process	Male	Female	Both
Garden work	Felling trees, burning timber, initial tillage, dig hole for yam, cover yam and make small mound on top, cut large support stick for yam vine, build yam house, protection of female workers	Secondary tillage, clear debris, place yam in hole, trail vines around major support, weed, harvest, scrape needles from yam, carry yams to store, care for yams in storage, carry yams to house	Clear undergrowth, plant crops other than yams, cut and place initial support for yam vine
Hunting	Hunting pigs, bandicoot, possum, wallaby		
Fishing	Reef fishing	Shallow fishing	Net fishing
Gathering	Collect nuts and fruit where tree climbing is required, collect sago, collect vines to be used as rope	Collect nuts and fruit where tree climbing is not required, collect green vegetables and coconuts, collect and carry firewood, carry water	Gather material for artefact production
Domestic work	Sago preparation	Daily food preparation, child care, feeding pigs, making cigars	Drying tobacco
House building	Felling trees and palms, sewing sago leaf for erection of house	Food preparation for male workers	Carriage of timber and palms
Artefact production	Tool manufacture, hulling canoes, weaving mats, making bark loin cloths, making nets	Make grass skirts	Weaving baskets
Ceremonial	Slaughter and distribution of pigs, burial of dead, celebration of male secret cult, collecting young coconuts	Food preparation for feasts	
Trading	Long distance trade		Short distance trade
Inter-village fighting	Planning fight, manufacture of weapons, battle, conciliation		

from long distance trading reinforced their exclusion from the political arena. Harding (1967:59-60) argues that long distance trade in this area was largely to maintain political relations with other groups. The desire by men to control the political arena may have contributed to the sexual division of labour in trading.

Male power over women was also expressed in several ceremonial forms and the arrangement of marriages.<sup>4</sup> For example, only men were admitted to the house (*haus tambaran*) in which most political decision-making was done and religious artefacts were stored. Male elders also arranged marriages based on a system of sister exchange. Rights over children born of a woman were held by her affines rather than her agnates. During menstruation women were isolated from men because of their polluting powers.

This jumble of statements about the pre-colonial male/female relationship tends to imply that females were subordinated to males. This power relationship was reinforced during colonization, although the precise mechanisms were altered. Some of the barriers restricting women's entry to the cash economy are founded on the unequal power relationship between men and women.

#### Problems arising during the colonial period

During the colonial period men became involved in the cash economy through wage employment and cash crop production and women became more intimately connected with the home and production within the subsistence economy. Men were the first to be brought into wage labour; they were the first to be approached in agricultural cash crop extension; they were granted loans because they were the landholders; and they were the first to receive training for skilled employment. It is hardly surprising that they have been more successful in the cash economy.

Demands for labour by plantation owners, the administration and the missions were high during the colonial period. Initial labour recruitment was directed towards men although some women were involved in the lighter tasks and in areas regarded by the colonizers as traditionally female.

Experience in wage labour varied throughout the region. In the early 1900s peri-urban villagers were reluctant to work on plantations because they had access to imported commodities via the sale of village produce. Peri-urban villagers preferred to sell vegetables to supply food for the increasing plantation population. Increased vegetable production within the village

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<sup>4</sup>Apparently, women in the Madang region exerted a degree of power over men through love-magic and refusing food and hospitality to visitors in order to shame their husbands publicly (L. Morauta, pers. comm., 1984).

maintained women's productive role within the village, however the marketing was controlled by men in the mould of long distance trading.

It became necessary for the administration to use force to recruit local labour. This action was ratified in 1903 by the enactment of an ordinance whereby the German administration could exact compulsory labour on the roads and government plantations for four weeks without pay (Rowley 1958:167).

Women from the peri-urban villages were required to cut grass along the Main North Coast Road to Alexishafen and to clean (Sack and Clark 1979:73). As labour demands continued to increase, compulsory labour was recruited from Karkar and Bagabag Islands (Sack and Clark 1979:293). It is not clear if women were involved.

Peri-urban village men were employed also as casual labourers, unloading ships, building bush houses for Europeans and making roads and bridges. Later, many became employed as boat crew, a task to which they were well suited because of their experience on the sea with long distance trading. A few single women were employed to assist white women in the home and in child care.

Employment opportunities for Takians and Bagabag Islanders were limited at first to indentured plantation labour on the mainland and the Bismarck Archipelago. Recruiters took only men. When plantations were established on Karkar Island after 1912 male labour was recruited to work on the island. At this stage Karkar Islanders had few alternative sources of cash. The vegetable market did not develop to the same extent as it did on the mainland because by this time rice had become the staple food for plantation workers.

On Bagabag Island employment opportunities have always been limited. The only plantation was established after World War II and the policy was not to employ Bagabag Islanders. A prerequisite for wage employment was migration.

There were few employment opportunities for women during the early stages of colonization because of the male-focused recruitment policies. A new division between the workplace and the home was established and correspondingly a division between male and female work. The division was reinforced by an increase in labour demands on women and the few men who remained in the villages due to the loss of male labour to employment.

Hannemann (n.d.), a missionary who worked in the region between the early 1920s and the mid-1960s, notes that women complained that they were merely producing labourers for the whites. Female labour in the villages produced cheap labourers for plantations. The costs of upbringing, sickness benefits, unemployment benefits and retirement were all met by village production rather than the employer. The only cost met by the plantations was the

daily maintenance of the labourer. It was in the interests of plantation owners and the administration for women and some men to remain in village production.<sup>5</sup>

Men's experiences in plantation agriculture also set the scene for their predominance in smallholder cash crop production. Before plantations started producing in the early 1900s most copra was produced from village coconut palms; however, this market faded with increased plantation production. The Germans encouraged plantation labourers to plant coconut palms when they returned to their villages, mainly for nutritional reasons (Shand and Straatmans 1974:65). During the inter-war period villagers attempted to increase copra production. However, this move was discouraged by plantation owners who foresaw the consequent shortage of plantation labour.

In the late 1940s villagers within the region attempted to establish themselves as smallholder producers. With the money from war damages and lump sum payments received for working under ANGAU (Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit) men had the financial backing to embark on projects aimed to obtain the white man's wealth. On Karkar Island their first priority was to provide a transport link to Madang town. Villagers also began to plant coconut palms and build copra driers cooperatively.

Planting coconut palms was grafted on to the system of domestic food production. Coconut palms were planted within food gardens, giving a multiple purpose to land cleared for gardening and to the protective fences. Because of men's plantation experience they were in charge of spacing and planting the coconuts. Women assisted in general maintenance of the coconut groves and later in the production of copra.

These spontaneous post-war informal cooperative movements occurred in many areas in Papua New Guinea and the administration felt they should be formalized. The activities of the official cooperatives included buying copra and setting up tradestores in the villages as incentives for cash crop production. The administration-run cooperatives trained only male clerks in simple buying and book-keeping practices. These clerks purchased copra and sent it to Madang to the Copra Marketing Board. The success of the official cooperatives was short-lived, but the training received by men during this period reinforced men's control of the smallholder cash crop production which later developed in the area.

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<sup>5</sup>Because of the rigid sexual division of labour in some areas of village production, it was essential that some men remain. A close watch was kept on the proportion of men recruited from the villages to avoid over-recruiting and the possible collapse of village production.

During the colonial period the need for skilled Papua New Guinea labour increased — especially for mission work. High schools and technical schools were opened first near Madang town and later on Karkar Island. Education is a mechanism through which people are socialized into certain roles within society. Early education policies within the Madang region tended to favour males and give them the necessary background for entry into skilled employment.

When the Lutheran Mission first opened schools in the peri-urban area in the 1900s, there was a junior school for both males and females. Even so, when the congregational secondary school was opened in Madang, only boys enrolled. In 1956 the only congregation with a girls' secondary school was based at Amele, and no girls attended the high school in Madang town. Lutheran technical schools for males were established at Bitabag near Madang town and on Karkar Island, and men acquired skills such as carpentry and plumbing.

There were many barriers to female education during the colonial period. First, and most importantly, there was little apparent need to educate women because of the lack of skilled female employment opportunities. Second, in the early mission education system students were also plantation labourers. In the morning they attended lessons but in the afternoon they worked on the mission plantations. This was regarded as a male task. The problems of parents allowing their sexually vulnerable, hard-working daughters to leave the village was hardly relevant in this context.

During the colonial period precedents were set for male rather than female involvement in wage employment and cash crop production. Women were not disadvantaged only in relation to their lack of involvement in the cash economy but also because labour demands on women in gardening and domestic work increased due to the loss of male labour.

#### The contemporary situation

Female involvement in the cash economy has increased dramatically in the Madang region in the last 15 years. More females attend high school and consequently enter employment. Women are involved in cash crop and petty commodity production, although the degree of female productive involvement in the cash economy falls short of male involvement. When the expenditure patterns are examined it appears that females produce to maintain the level of subsistence whereas men tend to use money for individual consumption. Also, men usually have control over the surplus and therefore have the opportunity to invest in economic development.

As mentioned earlier, precedents were set within the colonial period which limited female education and subsequently their opportunities to enter skilled employment. In the past 15 years, job opportunities for females have increased and the education

of females has become a greater priority. Education for both boys and girls at primary school and high school level is optional. The pattern of female enrolments in high school varies between areas. The reasons for this are complex but tend to centre around problems of access.

High schools within the region are located on the north coast of Karkar Island and in Madang town. Students from the peri-urban villages can commute daily to town, some Takia students can also commute to Karkar High School while others live at the high school during the week. All students from Bagabag Island have to board. Parents within the region are less likely to allow their daughters to attend high school if it means they have to leave the village. Parents may be afraid that their daughters will become pregnant, with the lack of social control, and therefore not finish their education and get a job. Sons are a better risk in that sense. Another problem relating to access to high schools is that, if students 'live-in', the school fees are higher and limited finance becomes a greater factor.

The economic base in the village and the associated demands for female labour also affect high school enrolments. For example, on Bagabag Island subsistence gardening is still the main form of production in conjunction with cash crop production. The labour demands on single females are high. In contrast, subsistence gardening in Siar village has become less important and therefore the demands for female labour have decreased. In Siar village, women can contribute more to the village economy through employment and therefore education is encouraged.

From expenditure surveys conducted in Siar village in 1980 it was found that employed single women tend to contribute a greater proportion of their wage to the maintenance of the household than single men and perhaps this is part of the reason why female high school education is encouraged. Single Siar women who are employed in skilled positions usually request their employer to deduct 15 per cent of their pay and put it into a savings account. They also give money to their mothers for the purchase of food, or alternatively purchase food personally and give it to their mothers. Other expenditures of single employed women were on clothing for herself and family members, school fees, cassettes, cigarettes, daily lunches and transport to work by bus.

Single employed men usually give approximately 25 per cent of their wage to their mothers for the purchase of food. They spend the rest of the money on beer for themselves and their friends, cigarettes, daily lunches from the snack bar and occasionally a large item such as a radio/cassette player or a guitar.

High school education socializes students into the workforce. Consequently, when high school graduates return to the village they are dissatisfied with village work. Few female graduates

like to work in the garden. Their aspirations are generally to gain employment and to marry educated men. In order for Bagabag women to gain employment they must leave the island, and if they marry educated, employed men from another area it is unlikely that they will return. Investment in the education of females in this case may be regarded by parents and relatives as a waste of money. In contrast, an educated woman from Siar village does not necessarily have to leave home to get a job. If she marries an educated man they may well live in the village or Madang town which is just a few kilometres away. In this case, the investment by parents is not so easily lost.

The problems of access are reflected in the high school enrolments from each area. Table 8.2 shows that, in the age group 15 to 25 years, 24 per cent of women both resident in and absent from Siar village have attended high school compared to only 16 per cent from Bagabag Island. The proportion of males from the two areas who have attended high school is greater than the proportion of females. In Siar village, 33 per cent of males attended high school and 38 per cent from Bagabag Island. These figures also show that a greater proportion of males attended high school from Bagabag Island than from Siar village. Table 8.2 shows that approximately 28 per cent of males and females aged between 15 and 25 years from both Siar village and Bagabag Island had attended high school. The lower proportion of males from Siar village may be related to the greater proportion of females attending high school.

Table 8.2

High school enrolments from Siar village and Bagabag Island by sex: residents and absentees<sup>a</sup> (15-25 years)

	<u>Siar village</u>			<u>Bagabag Island</u>		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Persons	64	71	135	103	94	197
Persons who attended high school	21	17	38	39	15	54
Proportion who attended high school (%)	33	24	28	38	16	27

<sup>a</sup>The information on absentees may be incomplete because of the difficulties incurred in collecting this type of information.

Source: Field data, 1980.

Barriers to female employment are not only made by lack of education. Barriers also arise from the type of economic development fostered. For example, private industry is the major employer in Madang, offering jobs in a cigarette factory, a wood chipping and band timber mill, a cordial factory, an engineering firm and on the wharves and shipways. These are traditionally male areas. Other employment opportunities exist in retail and service industries. The government only employs about 30 per cent of the labour force in Madang and only about 18 per cent of public service employees are women.

Although employment opportunities for women in Madang have increased, the rate of total job creation is slowing down. Some of the major employment opportunities for women in Madang are in nursing, teaching, clerical, retail, domestic service and in a clothing factory. Most opportunities are for skilled women and this restricts employment opportunities for women in general.

The number of women who enter employment varies throughout the region and, as with education, one of the important factors is proximity to opportunities. Women in Siar village are advantaged because they can live in the village and commute daily to work. This reduces some parental opposition stemming from the lack of social control. Also, because women live close to Madang they can more easily apply for jobs when they become available and, because nearly 40 per cent of working age (20 to 49 years) men in the village are in permanent employment, they are able to advise women when jobs become available.<sup>6</sup>

In 1980, ten women living in Siar village were employed, which represented about 10 per cent of working aged women (Table 8.3). Nine of the ten women were aged between 18 and 25 years. Two were married with children and, of the remaining eight, two were single mothers. The children of the working women were cared for by relatives during the day. Six women were employed as clerks, two as domestic servants, one as a shop assistant and the other as a nurse. Some young women gained casual employment on nearby Matupit Plantation picking cocoa.<sup>7</sup>

Of the women permanently employed six were in skilled occupations. The two women who worked as domestic servants were single mothers and had Standard 6 education. They were compelled to enter wage employment to provide essentials such as food, clothing and school fees for their children. They both expressed a wish to

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<sup>6</sup>Both men and women commonly find out about job opportunities through the *wantok* system.

<sup>7</sup>A relative was the manager of the plantation and notified them when work was available. As discussed later, women in the region are more involved in cocoa than copra production.

leave work but felt this was impossible unless they married. Having children had actually pushed them into the workforce.

Table 8.3  
Population of Siar village by age, sex and  
employment status, 1980

Age (years)	Males		Females	
	Total	Employed	Total	Employed
0-9	70	0	64	0
10-19	69	2	69	2
20-29	45	23	35	7
30-39	24	8	29	0
40-49	26	5	18	1
50-59	10	1	15	0
60-69	15	0	8	0
70-79	3	0	3	0
Total	262	39	241	10
Total 20-49 years	95	36	82	8

Source: Field data, 1980.

In contrast to the Siar village situation, few women from Bagabag Island have entered employment. From information collected about absentees from the island in 1980, it was found that only two women were currently employed — one as a nurse and the other as a mission teacher on Karkar Island. These forms of employment were associated with strict social control over housing arrangements. A few women resident on Bagabag Island had attained Form 4 level of education and had ambitions to work as nurses at the hospital on Karkar Island. However, their parents intended to keep them on the island for a few years until they matured. On Bagabag Island control of young women by male elders is still very strong. Elders prefer women to marry men from the island and facilitate this by arranging marriages. If women leave the island in the course of education or employment, the elders' control is weakened.

Another major form of economic activity in the Madang region is cash crop production. The development of cash crop production and female participation varies throughout the region. In the peri-urban villages cash crop production is poorly developed in comparison with the other areas. To illustrate, in Siar village there are approximately thirteen coconut palms per head of population whereas on Bagabag Island, a small cash crop producing area, there are fifty palms per head. There appear to be two main reasons for the lack of cash crop production in the peri-urban

villages: first, the shortage of land and second, the alternative of wage employment which offers better returns per labour hour.

The situation is very different on Karkar Island. The island is very fertile and cash crop production is well established. Women are not entirely excluded from remuneration from cash crop production as they tended to be during the cooperative period. In many instances women assist with copra production by the collection of coconuts, and splitting the shells after they are husked by men. Payment is almost always received by men, however.

Women became increasingly involved in cash crop production with the rapid simultaneous growth of copra and cocoa production in the 1960s. Men remained the main copra producers while women harvested and sold cocoa. Prices received for cocoa on Karkar Island were lower than in other regions and perhaps this partly explains why women are the main producers on Karkar Island, whereas in regions where prices and production levels are higher, men are in charge.<sup>8</sup>

On Karkar Island, the division of labour of women in cocoa production and men in copra production was rationalized by the villagers who said that picking cocoa was similar to the task of picking papaw which was traditionally a female task. There was also a correlation between the perceived low value of papaw as a food, which villagers termed *rubbis kaikai* (rubbish food), and the low price and total income from wet bean.

The payment for cocoa received by women is generally used to purchase food, clothing and other commodities required for daily existence, and the surplus is given to men. Although women are not excluded from cash crop production and access to money, they are excluded from control over the surplus. Men have the opportunity to invest in production, for example by contributing to the purchase of a truck or the establishment of a tradestore.<sup>9</sup>

On Bagabag Island cash cropping is increasing in importance. In 1980 copra production was the major industry. Men and women cooperate in copra production but in most cases the male receives the payment. However, when the household has no immediate pressing needs for cash, a member of the household (often a woman) can elect to produce copra. This person becomes the coordinator of

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<sup>8</sup>Shand and Straatmans (1974:81) note that, between 1965 and 1966, wet cocoa bean on Karkar Island was purchased only by plantation owners for 2-4 cents per pound and, for the same period, the Tolai Cocoa Project, a male dominated cooperative in East New Britain, purchased wet bean for 6 cents per pound.

<sup>9</sup>Because men have access to surplus and they are the landholders, they have more opportunities to get loans for further investments.

production and does most of the preparatory work of cutting the grass and collecting the coconuts. Other members of the household or clan are called on by the coordinator to assist with husking, splitting, and carrying the coconuts to the drier. When the copra is sold, the coordinator receives most of the proceeds which are usually spent on an item for the individual such as a sewing machine, a radio/cassette recorder or kitchen utensils, while the remaining income is used to purchase items for general consumption of the household. The position of coordinator rotates between male and female adult members of the household, but the male head has ultimate power over the production of copra and may choose to confiscate the proceeds.

Problems for women arising from the development of cash cropping are not limited to their restricted access. Increased male participation in cash cropping tends to increase the work load of women within the subsistence sector. In areas where women participate in cash crop production, this work load is usually in addition to their increased work loads in subsistence production (Table 8.4). In these circumstances the price for a degree of economic independence is high. If the consequences of increased cash crop production is a decrease in food production (e.g. because of the loss of male labour or the loss of fertile gardening land), the purchase of food may become necessary. If women are excluded from economic activity they may become increasingly dependent on men for their survival.

A form of cash economy participation which tends normally to include women is the production and sale of vegetables in the local market. However, women from the peri-urban villages, Karkar and Bagabag Islands participate only to a limited extent. For example, women in Siar village rarely sell vegetables in the market because they barely have enough to feed their families.<sup>10</sup> If Siar women need money they may on some occasions sell a few yams. Men complain that they sell the best yams but this is necessary if they are to compete with high quality vegetables produced in the Amele area. The money women receive from selling vegetables in the market is usually spent on imported food from the store.

Karkar village women tend not to sell vegetables if they have the alternative of cocoa as a source of cash because cocoa gives a better return per labour hour. Vegetables in the local markets on Karkar Island are often grown by the wives of migrant plantation labourers.

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<sup>10</sup>The reasons for the lack of garden produced food in Siar village are complex but are concerned with the lack of land (due to land alienation and rapid population increase), the lack of male labour contributions to gardening (due to wage employment) and a preference for purchased food, especially by the young.

Table 8.4

Sexual division of labour before and after the  
introduction of copra production

Before copra production			After copra production		
Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
Cut bush	Cut under- growth		Cut bush	Cut under- growth	
Burn bush	Scatter ash		Burn bush	Scatter ash	
Build fence	Gather vine and sticks for fence		Build fence	Gather vine and sticks for fence	
Divide garden with wooden poles			Divide garden with wooden poles		
Build yam house and trellis		Plant short matur- ing crop	Mark ground for coco- nuts	Plant short maturing crop	
Dig ground	Place yam in hole		Plant coconuts	Plant other crops	
Build yam mound					
Maintain fence	Weed	Plant other crops	Maintain fence	Weed	
	Harvest and clean yams			Harvest crops	
	Carry yams to yam house			Carry crops to house	
	Harvest crops			Cut grass in plantation	

Source: Field notes, 1980.

In the early 1970s, women from Bagabag Island attempted to sell vegetables on Karkar Island. They made two successful trips but the practice was stopped because men wanted the boats to transport their copra. Producing vegetables for market is not an uneconomic proposition. Three men on Bagabag Island have opted to produce vegetables rather than copra. The men and their

families have moved away from the village and do not participate in systems of labour exchange typical of copra production.

Bagabag Island women sell a few vegetables in a temporary market, one day a week. The market first started in 1978 when it was decided by villagers that the four teachers and their families on the island (who were not from Bagabag Island) should pay for their vegetables rather than get them for nothing. The market also became a method of redistributing cash amongst women. For example, old women who do not have an alternative source of cash sell vegetables.

Another economic opportunity open to women is the production of handicrafts for the developing tourist industry, but opportunities are limited to peri-urban women because of their proximity to Madang town and tourists. An interesting example of women's involvement in handicraft production is the pot industry of Yabob and Bilibil villages. Before contact clay pots produced by women in these villages represented a major trading item. Aluminium pots have since replaced clay pots in everyday cooking, and clay pots are now mainly produced for ceremonial gift exchanges and to sell to tourists.

Yabob and Bilibil women sell clay pots in the town market and to tourists who visit the village. In Bilibil village, they have constructed a hut in which women display their pots. Tourists may come to the village and buy these pots from a man who manages the store. He keeps a small percentage and the producers receive the balance.

In Yabob village, production and sale of pots are organized differently. Most pots produced are sold in the town market. Tourists who visit the village are directed to a store operated by a man named Willie Ber. He employs four women who come to the store daily to produce pots. Materials are supplied, and payment is at piece rates. The mark-up between the price paid to the producers and the selling price is between 100 and 150 per cent. This is another example of where men are the managers and women the managed.<sup>11</sup>

Gender relations in production have changed with changes in the economic system. In the pre-colonial society both men and women contributed to the production of their subsistence needs. The roles of men and women were complementary and interdependent, although women were subjugated to men. There was little separation between the workplace and the home and between productive and

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<sup>11</sup>In the 1960s the International Labour Organisation sent a man to Yabob and Bilibil villages in an attempt to organize commercial pot production. Men became the managers of production and marketing but the project was eventually undermined by intra-village rivalry.

non-productive roles. The emergence of wage employment and simple commodity production has contributed to greater individualism of the family and of men and women.

The present form of gender relations in the cash economy are a product of the pre-colonial and the colonizing societies. Within the pre-colonial society, although both men and women were involved in production, men were the managers and women were the managed. Men were the landholders and exerted power over women in a number of ways. Women were associated with both the home and the field. In the colonial society, separation developed between production for consumption and production for exchange. The entry of males into wage labour and cash crop production reinforced the female role in subsistence production (production for consumption). In the contemporary situation, even though some women have entered the cash economy, the remuneration is generally used to supply subsistence needs such as food and clothing. Women have very little access to surplus cash and therefore have little opportunity to participate actively in economic development.

The position of women within the cash economy varies throughout the Madang region because of the different forms of economic development. The opportunities open to women are limited in part by their location in relation to the market place and their restricted mobility. The problems which face women are not homogeneous throughout the region and vary greatly between rural and urban areas. Thus, it is difficult for rural and urban women to come together and contribute to the formulation of general policies. It becomes more difficult for women when there is a lack of coordination between groups (such as the church, government departments and international organizations) which are trying to assist women. These groups tend to pull women in different directions and in some cases only succeed in confusing and dividing the women they intended to assist.

The problems experienced by women in the Madang region cannot be generalized to the whole of Papua New Guinea or the Pacific. Because different regions possessed different forms of pre-colonial society and have had different historical experiences since colonization, the specific problems facing women vary. Consequently approaches which are successful in one region will not necessarily be successful in another region. Any general policies regarding women should be flexible enough to cater for this diversity.

In conclusion, the present form of gender relations are directly related to the type of economy and therefore are very difficult to change by reformist policies. This is not to propose that nothing should be done to improve the opportunities for women in the cash economy; rather, it is an attempt to explain why moves to assist women are fraught with difficulties.

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## 9

### Women in the fisheries of the South Pacific\*

Penelope Schoeffel

Women are important in their role of facilitators, since they are often responsible for the marketing and distribution of fish. Women are also an important link between low-income undernourished consumers and fish products. Strengthening the role of women in fisheries by providing them with better access to financial and material resources may lead, among other benefits, to greater quantities of fish being made available to the poor (from the report of the discussions and conclusions of an expert consultation on the Role of Fish and Fisheries in World Nutrition, FAO, Norway, 1983).

Women's role in the contemporary fisheries of the South Pacific is characterized by four paradoxical facts. The first is that the subsistence contribution of women's fishing activities to daily household diets is indispensable in most coastal communities, yet women have minimal access to boats, fishing tackle, new technology or extension services from government fisheries departments. The second is that fishing follows an established but culturally variable division of labour between men and women which is often a practical and mutually supportive arrangement; yet where fisheries activities have been formally planned and developed, women are largely excluded from direct participation. The third is that the traditional fishing grounds of women – the inshore area, shores, lagoons, swamps, tidal pools, lakes and rivers – are areas in which various forms of mariculture are possible, yet in trial projects in the region no consideration has been given, so far, to involving women. The fourth paradox is that the greatest and most technically varied participation by women in fishing is to be found in certain Melanesian communities, yet it is a great deal easier to identify ways to assist women in fisheries in Micronesian and

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\*This paper is based on a study and project identification exercise undertaken for the Australian Development Assistance Bureau from April to September 1984 in Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Tonga, Western Samoa, Kiribati and Tuvalu.

Polynesian societies. In exploring these four paradoxical facts, this paper will examine both local cultural constraints and the biases of development planners which inhibit the more effective participation of women in fisheries. Suggestions will be made about ways in which women's participation might benefit the overall development of fisheries in the region.

### An overview of Pacific fisheries

To begin with it is necessary to sketch in briefly some background on current fisheries development in the South Pacific. There are three basic fisheries zones in the region, which support three distinct fisheries. The first is the in-shore zone, which supplies most of the subsistence requirements to a greater or lesser degree for most coastal island communities, as well as surplus catches which are sold or exchanged in local markets. The in-shore zone is the most varied in resources, yielding hundreds of species of fish, molluscs and crustaceans which are fished with almost as many catching methods. It is also the least commercialized zone owing to the difficulty of obtaining large catches of a single species, and it is the most subject to pressure and depletion in densely populated areas.

The second zone is the off-shore ocean banks where deep-water bottom fish such as snapper, grouper and a small range of other food species may be fished. This zone was only lightly exploited by traditional fishing methods in most parts of the South Pacific. But now, with the use of fish aggregating devices (FADs), motorized fishing boats, monofilament lines, and icemaking machines, most island states are gearing up for deep bottom fishing. The effort is justified because this fishery yields prime fish which can command top local and export prices, thus justifying the aid donated cost of establishing the fishery.

The third zone is that of the oceans, where large schools of migratory surface-swimming tuna may be caught. Tuna fishing is a major subsistence fishery in Samoa, Tuvalu and Kiribati and has been made more efficient in these countries in recent years through the introduction of motorized fishing boats and FADs. Tuna is a major world food commodity of considerable value and it is fished in the Pacific Ocean by a number of distant water fishing nations, among whom the United States and Japan are the giants. The participation of the Pacific island states in large-scale tuna fishing is relatively recent and has been fostered by the international recognition of Exclusive Economic Zones which have greatly expanded the territorial area of Pacific island states. However, of an annual catch of about 50,000 tonnes a year from the south, central and northwest Pacific, island states' vessels take less than 10 per cent. The ocean tuna fishery is of interest to all the Pacific island states in terms of the licence fees it can demand of distant water fishing fleets (although the United States

does not recognize ownership rights to migratory species such as tuna). The Solomon Islands and Fiji have joint venture tuna fishing and processing operations and the development of tuna fisheries is part of the development agenda of most island states, but such development projects require large amounts of capital and technical expertise. In the past local bait-fish resources and capital equipment and infrastructural costs have constrained Pacific islands governments from competing with distant water fishing nations. Now with an economy of scale which demands the use of purse-seine catching vessels, the spectre looms of future depletion of the western Pacific tuna resources.

For most island states, fisheries development is a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow. Faced with limited commercial agricultural resources and surrounded by large Exclusive Economic Zones, island governments are pinning great hopes on fisheries; large foreign earnings are hoped for from licence fees and royalties from foreign vessels, from the export of tuna and deep bottom fish and through national or joint venture catching and processing projects. Large savings are also hoped for in the form of import replacement by increasing supplies of locally caught fish to local consumers. Some governments also hope to engage in large-scale aquaculture similar to ventures in Taiwan and Hawaii. Accordingly expenditure and aid allocations for fisheries development are high in most Pacific island countries.

Against these hopes and plans are the current low world market prices for tuna (prices fell from \$1200 per tonne in mid-1981 to about \$700 per tonne in 1984), and stiff international competition and the possibility of resource depletion if prices rise. Other problems are the heavy cost of fuel for catching and chilling or freezing of fish, problems of transport and of gaining access to markets. In most Pacific island countries the entry into commercial fishing has required development of the industry from scratch, training fishermen in modern methods, equipping them with boats and tackle, and setting up marketing networks. This formidable task has been a costly and difficult process which has had to rely heavily on aid and foreign expertise.

In the popular imagination the Pacific Ocean and the shores of its thousands of small islands are thought to be teeming with fish, and the costs of developing fisheries are frequently not appreciated. The cry is often heard that 'foreign interests come here and catch our fish for nothing and then sell it back to us in tins', reflecting the fact that, despite the supposedly bountiful ocean, the diets of Pacific islanders are heavily dependent on tinned fish, to say nothing of tinned meat, frozen mutton flaps, chicken backs and sausages. The fact is that the resources of the tropical ocean are limited, and, in the majority of Pacific islands, imported protein is cheaper or more readily available than fresh local fish. For example, imported tinned fish retails for between 45 and 75 cents per 425 gram tin in most countries in

the region. Fresh fish ranges in price from \$1.30 to \$2.00 per kg in urban markets.

Table 9.1

Fish market prices, April-July 1984 (per kg)

Vanuatu	V\$ 1200-1800
Solomons	SI\$ 1.60-1.80
Fiji	F\$ 1.20-2.00
Kiribati	A\$ 1.25 (tuna)
Tuvalu	A\$ 1.20-1.50
Tonga	T\$ 1.50-2.50
Western Samoa	WS\$ 1.60-2.80

Commercial fishermen receive between 69 and 99 cents a kilogram from wholesale buyers in most island countries, prices which are only 'economic' to well-organized and well-equipped fishermen obtaining good catches which will make their fishing efforts worthwhile after they have allowed for the cost of fuel, ice, labour and loan repayments for boats, tackle and outboard motors. The current strategy of developing deep bottom fishing around the Pacific will not, and probably can not, be a means of providing island populations with food which is competitive in terms of availability, price and convenience with tinned fish and other imported meats.

The commercial potential of the in-shore areas of most Pacific islands, the zone in which most subsistence fishing is done, is minor compared to that of the ocean zones. Without the promise of profitable cash returns, the in-shore zone is of greatest interest to development planners in relation to bait-fish resources, bêche-de-mer and various forms of aquaculture. As population pressure increases, stocks of reef fish and other once plentiful seafoods such as clam shell are declining, with the effect that Pacific island populations are becoming increasingly dependent on imported food.

Fisheries are an integral part of the development dilemma faced by all Pacific island nations. Ocean fish and other edible marine organisms such as crayfish and clam constitute one of the few valuable local resources which can be bartered to the outside world in return for the imported goods which have become so indispensable to island people.

The first paradox: women's contribution to subsistence fishing is indispensable in most Pacific fishing communities, yet women have minimal access to boats, fishing tackle or fisheries extension assistance

In the past Pacific islanders had specialized economic subcultures which were greatly influenced by their environment. Although most Pacific islanders supported themselves with a very similar range of crops and livestock, each community made local adaptations and followed economic specializations determined by the conditions of the islands they occupied and the sea, if it was accessible. It is important to remember that the *majority* of Pacific island peoples, particularly in Melanesia, lived inland and had little if any tradition of fishing in the sea, although they may have exploited inland streams and ponds. Today hundreds of communities in the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and New Caledonia have been relocated on the coast because of missionary or colonial influence, and for such communities, fishing is still a very minor part of their traditional economy. Other populations, particularly those of very small islands and atolls, depend on the sea for their existence. In culturally diverse regions of Melanesia, the situation such as the one found on Manus Island was typical, where lagoon dwelling *solwara* people specialized in fishing and traded their catch to inland people in return for root crops and game.

Although it is impossible to generalize about subsistence fisheries in the South Pacific, I am willing to make one large and unqualified generalization — that in Pacific communities where fishing is done, the contribution of women's fishing to the daily diet is at least as significant as that of men. For example, a recent study by Wass (1980) of the in-shore fishery of American Samoa indicates that, although women are the minority (17 per cent) of those engaged in fishing, their activities in gleaning for octopus, shellfish, sea urchins and sea cucumbers account for about a third of the total annual catch and almost a third of all time spent in fishing. These figures are particularly interesting because American Samoa is a highly urbanized society in which subsistence activities are of fairly minor significance, compared to other Polynesian societies. Leon Zann (pers. comm., 1984) estimates that catch rates for Western Samoa are very similar and calculates daily average consumption of invertebrate seafood in rural Upolu at 43 grams per capita (17 per cent of daily seafood consumption).

Marriott (1984) measures shellfish as 20.8 per cent of the total catch in South Tarawa (where almost half of the population of Kiribati lives), and notes that 11 per cent of households in South Tarawa are almost completely dependent on shellfish for protein food. He suggests (pers. comm.) that these households may all be headed by women, with no man to go ocean or net fishing. But there are other important gleaned seafoods consumed

by I-Kiribati such as seaworms (*te ibo*) and octopus which are mainly caught by women and which are not measured, or else included collectively in statistics as 'other species'. In South Tarawa 'other species' account for a further 20 per cent of the total catch.

In suburban Nuku'alofa able-bodied women go gleaning around the lagoon and reefs three or four times a week, according to information given to me in June 1984 in Houmakelikao settlement. The Nuku'alofa open-air fish market stalls were dominated by women selling baskets of shellfish, packages of jellyfish and other invertebrate seafoods during June and, since fresh fin-fish is very scarce during the winter months in Tonga, they were doing a brisk trade. McKoy (1980:37) cites figures which indicate that shellfish catches landed on Tongatapu (excluding giant clam which is fished by men as well as women) ranged from approximately 12,000 kg in 1974 to 77,000 kg in 1978.

Table 9.2

Gleaning in American Samoa's inshore fishery  
(adapted from Wass 1980)

	Kg per annum	Percentage of total catch
Catch from day gleaning	21,794	21
Catch from night gleaning	9,787	9
Total catch gleaned	31,581	32
Total annual catch (all methods)	99,302	100

There are very little data available on subsistence fisheries and even fewer on gleaning. Because gleaning uses no interesting technology it has been of little concern to ethnographers and has received the most scholarly attention from pre-historians who have studied contemporary shell collecting to throw light on the economic activities of pre-contact communities as represented in shell middens. Fisheries departments tend to regard gleaning as being of little economic significance compared with other subsistence fishing activities, however Lal and Slatter (1982) have shown the importance of the women's fresh-water *kai* fishery in the internal economy of Fiji.

Indeed, during my study I found that a typical response from fisheries officers in the seven countries in which I worked was that 'women don't fish, they just collect shells'. In fact, whereas gleaning of invertebrates is the typical women's fishery

in Western Samoa, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Tonga, the women of fishing communities in Fiji, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands are likely to use a variety of methods to catch fin-fish from in-shore areas as well. An excellent description of the high degree of variation in women's fishing in Fiji has been provided by Lal and Slatter (1982), but there are little quantitative data available for other parts of Melanesia. As Lal and Slatter note, this has to do with the fact that:

women's role has come to be, at least ideologically, localized in the home where domestic duties have been made their primary responsibilities, despite the fact that they have extended their production-for-consumption activities to bring in income;

and as they also point out:

some fisheries extension staff tended to have the idea that women [are] not involved in commercial fishing. They saw the involvement of women as casual and unstructured or irregular and their output as negligible, possibly because their concept of commercial fishing was linked to larger-scale 'serious' operations involving extensive gear and equipment and large, regular catches. That women's catch of fish and non-fin products was fairly regular and sustained, involved an extensive traditional knowledge and a fairly substantial catch and income was not generally recognised. Such attitudes also play a part in directing fisheries development efforts towards men (Lal and Slatter 1982: 131).

It is now recognized that one of the legacies of the religious and economic intervention by Westerners in Pacific island societies has been a denial of the economic roles of women (see Schoeffel 1979; Schoeffel and Kikau 1980). But it is not just development planners who deny this. For example, in 1980 Eci Kikau and I did a study of the division of labour between men and women in a village of Tailevu, in Fiji. We found that when asked what work women did, both men and women insisted that women's work was concerned with cooking and keeping house, and that productive work was done only by men. Yet we found that women were in fact doing most of the planting and fishing in that village.

A more recent example comes from the brief study I did of women's fishing in the Western Province of the Solomon Islands. My co-worker Martina Maena and I were visiting some villages on Parara island on the Vonavona lagoon and, as we came in to Buni village, we passed two canoes carrying a group of women. We spent several hours at Buni talking to men and some old ladies (the able-bodied women were all out working in their gardens) about their fishing and they gave us a long list of fishing

methods which everyone said were 'men's fishing'. Then I enquired about the women we had passed on our way into the village. I was told that they had gone fishing. I asked what methods they would be using and was told that they were going to use fishing lines and nets. Only ten minutes previously they had told me that these were 'men's fishing methods'. What this actually meant was that the nets, lines and hooks, and the canoes, belonged to men, not to women. If the men were going fishing, I was told, they would probably use one of the modern fibreglass canoes with an outboard motor instead of paddling dugout canoes, as the women were doing.

The traditional secondary status of women in most Melanesian fishing communities prevents women from owning capital goods such as canoes and fishing nets because these are scarce and prestigious, and even if women were able to obtain money to buy them it is likely that they would be controlled by men, who traditionally exercise control over wealth and property. This poses a real constraint to making women's fishing activities more effective or safe. For example, in the Dawasamu area of Tailevu, Fiji, women spend hours almost every day standing waist or armpit deep in the sea, casting lines for fish or setting nets. As a result most older women in the village of Luvunavuaka suffered from painful arthritic swellings of their joints and had injuries from the beaks of garfish. Furthermore these fishing methods place women in continuous danger of shark attack, since the fish they catch are stored in baskets tied around their waists as they stand in the water. If they fished from small punts using the same methods, these fisherwomen would be both safer and healthier, yet no one thought that obtaining boats for women was a priority. As far as we were able to ascertain, women did all the fishing in this village and no one owned a boat.

To develop my generalization: women's fishing is important to subsistence in all Pacific island fishing communities but women's fishing is not perceived officially as 'real fishing' and women tend not to own the means of fishing, such as canoes, nets and fishing tackle.

The situation which Lal and Slatter have described in Fiji holds true for most South Pacific countries. Government fisheries departments are committed to the development of commercial and industrial fisheries which involve training local men to become full-time professional fishermen or skilled workers on government or private industrial fisheries vessels. The subsistence and small part-time fishery characteristic of most fishing communities in the South Pacific receives little attention in the face of more pressing national economic priorities, and thus, because women's contribution is greatest in subsistence fishing and in selling fish on local markets, it tends to be ignored or under-estimated.

The second paradox: fishing follows an established but culturally variable division of labour between men and women, which is often a practical and mutually supportive arrangement; yet where commercial fisheries have been formally planned and developed women are largely excluded from direct participation

In those Pacific island communities where fishing is a *major* part of the local subsistence and cash economy, there is typically a division of labour between men and women in which men fish from canoes and boats in deep water, or from the reefs at night using flares and handnets, and women glean the reefs, soft shores and swamps for a variety of edible species and, in many communities, also use fish traps, nets and hand lines to catch fish in lagoons and tidal pools. Furthermore in urban or heavily populated areas, women typically clean and market the fish caught by men, as well as their own catches. In some islands, such as the Ha'apai group in Tonga, and the small islands of Kiribati and Tuvalu, women dry or smoke their own catches as well as fish caught by men to preserve it for subsistence or for sale. Communal fish drives are also arranged according to season and to need, in which men and women cooperate in making a large catch of fish.

Although in Melanesian societies the workload of women is usually greater than that of men on a daily basis, the traditional unit of production is the household and the work of men and women is complementary. During the past century, however, that balance has been disturbed in many areas by patterns of labour migration, in which significant numbers of men leave their villages for extended periods of time, leaving the women to carry out most of the tasks of subsistence during their absence. Women are tied to the village not only by their children but by their responsibility to maintain and replant crops and provide for their elders.

In the Melanesian islands where these trends have been the strongest, there is an associated conservatism about educating women to levels where they will be expected to leave their home areas to finish their training or to work. Women are expected to be the backbone of the village economy and to conserve traditional patterns of life in the absence of men.

These realities are strongly reflected in the fishing industries of the Solomon Islands where men are not only exclusively employed as commercial fishermen but also in onshore employment in fish canning and processing operations at Tulagi. In Vanuatu, on a much smaller scale, the same reality exists with the development of commercial fishing. Not only is all the organized commercial fishing done by men, but also the tasks of filleting and packing fish at the Port Vila fishmarket. The only woman employed is a saleswoman at the market's retail section.

In Fiji, the arrangement is more typical of fishing industries elsewhere; Fijian men are employed as fishermen alongside

Asian contract workers, and women as process workers in the cannery. The Pacific Fishing Company (PAFCO) is a joint venture fishing operation between the Government of Fiji and the Japanese firm, C. Itoh Company. Of about 150 local people working at the PAFCO cannery at Levuka, over 100 are women, who thus constitute the majority of those in regular wage employment on the island of Ovalau.

Another area in which women's participation in fisheries complements and supports that of men is in marketing. Most of the women selling fresh fish at the Port Vila market, according to a small survey I arranged in April 1984, were selling fish caught by someone other than themselves. About 50 per cent of my sample were selling fish caught by their husband or sons and the remainder were selling fish caught by themselves or by other women. In South Tarawa, Kiribati, hundreds of women hold hawkers' licences and sell their husband's catches from handcarts or at the Betio fishmarket. Tuvaluan women in Funafuti also sell their husbands' catches direct to consumers from handcarts.

In Fiji women are actively involved in selling fish. Whereas small-scale professional fishermen, who are mainly of Indian ethnicity, sell their fish through middlemen at markets, Fijian women sell their own catches and in some cases those of their husbands and other male relatives, if they have fishermen in the family.

In July 1984 a survey of women fish vendors at the Suva market showed that the main seafoods sold by women that month were shellfish, prawns, shrimps and octopus. Other items sold by women included cooked and smoked fish, edible seaweeds, sea cucumbers, crayfish and mud crabs. Most of the vendors were selling their own catches.

The daily average taking for seafood sales was F\$43.25 but the costs of freight, transport and market fees reduced the average taking to F\$33.81. Daily takings ranged from F\$5.00 to \$100.00, while costs ranged from 90 per cent to 4 per cent of takings, the average cost being 21 per cent of the daily taking. Most vendors travelled over 60 km, return trip, to Suva market from the villages in the Rewa River delta.

In Vanuatu, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Fiji, women's fish marketing activities co-exist with other marketing systems and small-scale fish selling tends to be regarded with a certain amount of disapproval by fisheries development planners. This is partly because of the lack of quality control and the sometimes unhygienic circumstances in which the fish is being sold, and partly because such selling activities are outside national marketing plans which aim to bring even the small market seller into the system.

Such plans often cut across the desire of small-scale fishermen and fisherwomen to maximize the value of their product by selling it themselves. The Kiribati Government recently decided to abandon an aid-donated project which would have provided the government centre of Bikenibeu with a modern fishmarket, on the grounds that the running costs would be too high. The scheme was also unpopular with local fishermen who have the option of selling their fish wholesale for about 75 cents per kg to the national fisheries corporation or of selling through their wives to the consumer for \$1.30 kg.

This method of selling is popular with I-Kiribati women because it gives them a legitimate share in household income. A central marketing scheme in which fish are bought and then re-sold would cut out women's participation as well as lower the return to the fishermen. The solution which would provide a more hygienic sales venue and at the same time give fishermen maximum returns, would be to construct a number of small sheltered fishmarkets equipped with selling tables, water and ice, where women could continue to market their husbands' catches. Such a proposal is now under consideration in Kiribati.

On small islands where fishing is essential for survival because of lack of land on which to grow crops, women have developed many traditional techniques of preserving fish so that it can be stored for use when fresh fish is not available. In Kiribati, women salt and dry the surplus catches made by men, as well as drying shellfish, seaworms and octopus, which they catch themselves. In Tuvalu women sun-dry finely sliced fillets of tuna caught by men, and in the Ha'apai group of Tonga dried octopus and salt fish are the main sources of cash earnings for the population of the small islands of O'ua, Felemea and Uiha.

Traditional fish preservation techniques have been developed over time to store small surplus catches of fish and there has been little if any work done on improving preservation techniques, on packaging and marketing preserved fish products, or on helping village people to develop systems of catching and preserving fish on a small-scale commercial basis. In Kiribati salt fish production has been tried in several areas by island cooperative societies. These efforts have not been successful owing to the manner in which they were organized. Fisheries staff in most Pacific island countries know how to dry and smoke fish but this knowledge is usually passed on only to men, to teach them how to cure bêche-de-mer or dry shark fins for export. There is a tendency among fisheries staff in many island countries to regard fish drying and smoking as rather retrogressive, reducing the value and marketability of fish. While fresh fish is certainly in higher demand, there is nevertheless a good under-supplied demand for dried and smoked fish products in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Tonga, and a demand could be stimulated in Vanuatu and Solomons.

The benefit to the fishermen and fisherwomen of remote communities lacking ready access to transport and freezing and chilling facilities is that dried fish can be stored for long periods; smoked fish will keep for at least a week, allowing it to reach markets a day or so of travel away. The same benefit is appreciated by low-income consumers who can store smoked or dried fish without the need of a refrigerator.

The traditional argument against promoting non-ice methods of fish preservation in the South Pacific is that these products are not traditional in the most populous areas of the Pacific and are to the taste of atoll and small island populations only. But it can be argued that tinned fish, mutton flaps and corned beef were not traditional foods either and yet they have become immensely popular. As the Tilapia fishery of the East Sepik province in Papua New Guinea demonstrated, salt dried fish, if it is properly packaged and promoted, can become a very popular food and a nutritional asset to protein-deficient inland communities. The challenge will be to design projects which will promote the production of preserved fish products which are competitive with canned goods.

There is a major need for research and training in product improvement and development aimed at local markets in the South Pacific, yet as George Kent has pointed out:

it should be recognised that the research agenda traditionally has been skewed to favour the development of revenue producing products and not to promote the development of products distinguished for their nutritional importance. For example reef fishing and the gleaning of shellfish from drying reefs have received little attention because they are not of great commercial importance, despite the fact that often they are significant in local nutrition. Prevailing research priorities are suggested by the fact that in the bibliographic section of fisheries newsletters, the section on nutrition is about the feeding of aquaculture species, not about human nutrition (Kent 1983).

The third paradox: the traditional fishing grounds of women – the in-shore reef tops, tidal pools, swamps, shores, lakes and rivers – are the areas with potential for aquaculture; yet so far in trial aquaculture projects in the South Pacific region, women have not been involved

Most of the research and practice on aquaculture or mariculture in the South Pacific has been in association with the tuna industry, in an attempt to culture bait-fish. So far the results have been far from promising. Cultured fish, like any other domestic livestock, must be fed, and the larger the scale on which they are being farmed the greater the amount of food that is needed to feed

them. A standard fish feed is chicken pellets which are a mixture of grain and fish meal, and these must be imported to the South Pacific. The largest fish farm in the region is at Bonriki, on South Tarawa in Kiribati. The farm is currently operating at a loss because of the lack of market for bait-fish (the national tuna fishery finds it more economic to fish most of its own bait). The farm can produce adult milkfish for sale as food but the product is too expensive for most local consumers. The future of this farm may lie in supplying overseas markets if transport difficulties can be resolved. Another large venture in aquaculture involves the cultivation of prawns in Fiji. This industry also faces problems with the cost of imported feed, and research is currently going on to see if a local feed can be developed. There is also widespread speculation that Tonga plans to go in for large-scale mullet farming in the Tongatapu lagoon and other locations, the problem of fish feed being the main constraint at present.

On a smaller scale there are pearlshell and pearl culture projects in Papua New Guinea and the Cook Islands, Eucheuma seaweed cultivation projects in Tonga and Kiribati, and Philippine green-lip mussel cultivation in Western Samoa. Although pearlshell and pearl culture is too technically specialized to be a widespread small rural industry for the South Pacific, seaweed and mussel culture show great promise because if grown in suitable zones they require no inputs other than labour, they are technically simple to cultivate, and starting costs are low.

Eucheuma seaweed is cultivated extensively in the northern Philippines, which is the major world supplier. In the mid-1970s trials were carried out on Christmas Island and Palau, and more recently in Kiribati atoll lagoons. Trials have also been conducted in Vava'u, Tonga, and it has been demonstrated that the weed grows well in the South Pacific, although there have been problems with production in Tonga, related to grazing by predators. The seaweed produces carageenan, which is used as a food stabilizer. Carageenan is in short supply on the world market and companies in New Zealand, the United States, Philippines and Sweden have expressed interest in buying dried Eucheuma seaweed from the South Pacific. Coast Biologicals, a New Zealand company engaged in joint venture seaweed farming with the government of Tonga, plans to set up an extraction plant for carageenan in Tonga when farm production levels are sufficient.

Eucheuma seaweed is grown in about 1.3 metres of water on lines pegged into the sand. It is harvested every ten weeks, after which it is dried on racks in the sun. To maximize value, the weed is washed to remove salt and dried again and then chopped and baled using simple small machinery. It is non-perishable and no more technically complicated to grow and process than copra. It is currently estimated that a single small farm (approximately ten 10-metre lines) can produce a crop worth \$3000 a year.

The present strategy of developing Eucheuma farms in Tonga and Kiribati is through family groups whereby ownership of and responsibility for each farm belongs to a man. It is my opinion that Eucheuma should be initially promoted through village women's committees in Western Samoa, Tuvalu and Kiribati as women's communal projects. My reasons are as follows:

1. In a 'family' project, it is likely that women will be doing most of the work anyway, since attaching the plants to ropes, checking the plants for predators and cutting the plants for harvest are routine tasks requiring a dexterity and patience attributed to women in most Pacific countries because of their skill in producing handicrafts.
2. Eucheuma farming falls within the traditional scope of women's fishing, utilizing the shore area which women glean for shellfish.
3. As a technically new project, farming Eucheuma through a women's group minimizes the risk (and the shame and ridicule) of failure by individuals or families.
4. For best results Eucheuma requires daily attention to the beds planted. Pacific islanders are not attuned to carrying out a single economic activity and prefer to pursue a mixed cash-subsistence economic pattern of cultivating crops, raising livestock, fishing, handicrafts and other pursuits. It has been found in Ponape that only Philippines emigrants, accustomed to economic specialization, have been successful cultivators of Eucheuma. If women's committees were to farm Eucheuma as a communal venture, they could roster their members in order to spread the labour commitment.
5. Women's committees in Western Samoa, Tonga, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Fiji have a tradition of carrying out communal projects to raise funds for the community. Eucheuma seaweed farms could quite conceivably yield between \$3000 and \$9000 a year to a village women's committee to finance village improvements, such as housing, water supply, church building, solar generators, sanitation, school, dispensary construction or dozens of other ventures.
6. By pioneering Eucheuma production through women's groups, rural people could learn about the crop and gain experience towards eventual individual cultivation if they wished.
7. Despite the usual legal provisions which accord ownership of the shore and sea to the state, Pacific islanders tend to have a collective proprietary interest in the shoreline close to their traditional land holdings. Competition and conflict over use of the shoreline zone would be minimized if seaweed was farmed as a project which benefited everyone in the community.

Another very promising aquaculture project for women is the cultivation of mussels. Like seaweed culture, this is also widely practised in the Philippines as a small-scale householder industry. Trials of mussel cultivation have been successfully undertaken in Western Samoa using spat imported from Tahiti by a Samoan marine biologist working with an American woman volunteer biologist. These researchers, Bell and Albert (1983), report that starting costs are low and, in proven locations, the mussels grow well. The first harvests of mussel sold very quickly and the local demand for mussels will probably be inexhaustible. While there are various methods of cultivating mussels, Bell and Albert found that growing the mussels on ropes suspended from rafts works well in sheltered bays with nutrient-rich waters. The fisheries division in Western Samoa has indicated that it would be willing to encourage village or district women's committees to operate mussel farms in suitable locations, apparently for many of the reasons that I have put forward in favour of women's committees operating seaweed farms. Samoan women have a good record in operating communal projects, and although I have contended elsewhere (Schoeffel 1983) that communal projects in Western Samoa have a limited life span, I believe that communal mussel farming projects could lead to women successfully operating individual farms on a long-term basis.

There are many other small-scale aquaculture possibilities which require research for their suitability to application in the South Pacific. For inland-dwelling women, more work should be done on small pond culture of species such as tilapia and milkfish. Coastal women would benefit from research into cage and pen cultivation of tilapia and mullet, and the culture of giant clams, a highly prized food in Samoa, Tonga and Fiji.

The fourth paradox: the greatest and most technically varied participation in fisheries by women is to be found in certain Melanesian communities, yet it is a great deal easier to identify ways to assist women in fisheries in Micronesian and Polynesian societies

In Vanuatu and Solomon Islands there are many communities in which the major part of regular fishing for subsistence is done by women. Not only do women in such communities glean for shellfish and other invertebrates every day, but they also use handlines, nets, canoes, fish poison, fish traps and many other specialized methods, obtaining a wide range of seafoods based on a very detailed knowledge of the in-shore marine environment. This is also true of the women of most Fijian coastal and small island settlements. On the surface of things it would seem that these countries would be the easiest in which to develop programs that would support women's fisheries at both subsistence and small-scale business levels.

In fact there is a number of major constraints to the development of such programs in Melanesia. The first is that there are very little detailed accessible data on subsistence agriculture and fishing and small-scale marketing activities of Melanesian communities, a fact that was recognized by the participants in the South Pacific Commission's regional women's meeting in Tahiti in 1981, which made the recommendation for a survey of the socio-economic status of South Pacific women. It is relatively easy to generalize about the roles of women in Kiribati, Tuvalu, Tonga, Western Samoa and Fiji because the local cultures and economic patterns are fairly homogeneous. But in the Melanesian countries other than Fiji such generalizations are very difficult to make. Certainly the prominent role of women in Melanesian societies as producers of subsistence food crops is now widely recognized; however, owing to the cultural and environmental diversity of Melanesia it is very difficult to generalize about the extent or the nature of small-scale fisheries and what roles are played by men and women. Without this knowledge it is very difficult to design appropriate programs of assistance. For example, Vanuatu has recently conducted an agricultural survey which will yield vital data for development planning in agriculture and fishing. The census found

that about half the households in the rural areas of the country were engaged in some fishing activity and of these households that live near the coast, Malekula and Efate showed the highest level of fishing activity, while Tanna showed the lowest, mainly because of the high proportion of the population living inland.

The handline is by far the most common item of fishing equipment followed by the traditional wooden spear. Spear-guns are also now in fairly general use. Amongst other items of traditional fishing equipment still used in the islands, the bow and arrow is the most common and Malekula is the island where traditional fishing gear is most used.

About half the households that go fishing have canoes but fishing from the shores is more widely practised than fishing from canoes and boats (press release, August 1984, Department of Statistics, Republic of Vanuatu).

Now this is fascinating information but it was collected on a household basis and there is no break-down of activities according to whether they are performed by men, women or children. Yet such data are vital if women's fishing activities are to be made more effective. A case for making women's fishing more effective has been made very clearly by Man Ming Hong (1983) in a nutrition survey of Vanuatu. She makes it very clear that an important strategy to offset patterns of under-nutrition in women and children in rural areas of Vanuatu is to encourage increased catching and consumption of fish. Without a break-down into

the roles played by men and women, the fisheries data collected by the agricultural census require considerable guesswork to interpret. My guess is that most of the regular gleaning and hand-lining is done by women and most of the diving and spearing is done by men, although women do use hand spears in many areas. This guess is based on the observations I made of women's fishing around Efate and interviews with women from Malekula, Santo, Pentacost and Ambae. I have the same broad impression of women's fishing in the Solomons, but this is not enough to design effective local level programs.

While I see this as the main constraint in assisting women's fisheries in the Solomons and Vanuatu there is another major problem to be considered in trying to promote any aspect of Melanesian women's work. This is the fact that in most Melanesian communities women are already overworked. Modernization of the economy through cash cropping has not assisted women but merely added substantially to their workloads (Ward *et al.* 1979; Schoeffel 1983).

While it is not for me to state what the priorities for Melanesian women should be, were I a Melanesian woman I would give priority to any development which reduced my workload and made my work more efficient and productive. Thus a feeling of caution assails me when I consider any recommendations for new projects and activities for women in the rural areas of Vanuatu and Solomons, although I believe that a great deal could be done in terms of providing equipment and training. To make specific recommendations, a great deal more information is needed, detailed socio-economic studies which focus on the division of labour between men and women, on local resources and household consumption patterns. The Victoria University of Wellington Rural Socio-Economic study of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands (1971-74)<sup>1</sup> is an excellent example of the sort of work I believe needs to be done, particularly the studies by Roger Lawrence and Anne Chambers, which carefully measured the division of labour between the sexes.

In contrast to the women of Melanesian fishing communities, the Polynesian women of Tuvalu, Western Samoa and Tonga, and the Micronesian women of Kiribati play a lesser, although nutritionally vital, role in fisheries, through their gleaning activities. But because of their less central role in agriculture, Polynesian and Micronesian women have more flexible working patterns and it is possible to introduce new activities without adding severely to their burdens. This observation was made in the Team Report on Kiribati and Tuvalu by the Victoria University team:

Women appear to carry out a much wider range of tasks than men, but the tasks are more intermittent in nature. It is

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<sup>1</sup>Since published by the Development Studies Centre, Australian National University, 1982-84.

possible that new cash earning activities could be accommodated more easily within women's activity pattern than men's with less interference to subsistence oriented activities and production (1982:170).

This generalization is also true of Western Samoa and Tonga. Thus the scope for programs of aquaculture, fish processing and small-scale fish marketing is excellent in these countries, although women are less active in the actual fish catching sector than are men.

### Conclusions

In this paper I have discussed four paradoxical facts about women in fisheries in the South Pacific which lead me now to make three generalizations about the barriers to women's increased participation in the development of fisheries.

First, the orientation of fisheries development in the South Pacific is generally towards participation in large-scale tuna fishing and/or training and equipping of specialist full-time commercial fishermen who will catch fish for export and for the middle and upper income local urban consumers. Subsistence fisheries and strategies for increasing the supply of fish to the majority of low-income earners has low, if any, priority and since women's fishing activities are mainly linked to subsistence and small marketing activities they receive little if any attention or support.

Second, because of the orientation of fisheries development, fish preservation methods focus on chilling and freezing (or canning primarily for export) and on market development where large centralized operations purchase fish directly from the fishermen. Thus preservation techniques which lend themselves to small village or household industries, such as drying and smoking, and local small-scale marketing activities, are considered as being of peripheral importance if any.

Third, for the same reasons, together with problems of staffing and research funds, small-scale aquaculture projects do not have high priority in fisheries development plans. Furthermore, because of stereotyped perceptions of women's roles, where such projects are promoted they are usually promoted through men.

My overall conclusion then is that the fundamental structure of fisheries development in the South Pacific is the greatest barrier to increasing women's participation in fisheries. While I fully appreciate the reasons why regional governments pursue this type of development in fisheries, I believe that certain reforms and modifications will have to be made in the future if the import dependency problems of the South Pacific are not to become

so great that they outweigh the benefits of exporting food resources, or of channelling them from the poor to high income consumers.

A more balanced policy in fisheries development would require governments to allocate more staff, funds and other technical resources to increasing the efficiency and productivity of small-scale and subsistence fisheries and of small-scale part-time commercial fisherwomen and women fish vendors. There is a need to look closely at the small-scale fisheries of Southeast Asia for techniques which can be promoted in the South Pacific in aquaculture, fish processing and product development and even local marketing strategies.

There are many opportunities for women to increase their participation in fisheries, both in actual catching and in on-shore supporting activities, but these activities will be difficult to promote effectively unless they form a *recognized* part of national development strategies. For example, in order to make fish processing more efficient, it is not enough simply to train women in improved preservation techniques. Their activities must be coordinated with extension on effective fishing techniques which yield a catch of sufficient size to make the processing activities economic. Furthermore there must be a means of transporting and marketing the products. Therefore extension assistance from fisheries is essential if such ventures are to be successful, as well as advisory assistance from departments of commerce or national marketing authorities.

Important agencies in promoting awareness at government level of the need to give more attention and support to subsistence food production and small-scale local marketing are the national food and nutrition committees which have recently been established in most Pacific island countries. Allied to this is the importance of research such as that currently being undertaken by Leon Zann of the University of the South Pacific, Institute of Marine Resources, on the relationship between in-shore fisheries and fish consumption patterns of island populations. There is a shortage of data or relevant analysis of data on the contemporary socio-economic conditions of Pacific islanders, particularly of women. This makes it difficult for planners to ask the right questions to develop good programs and leads to many invalid generalizations, and thus to ineffective development planning.

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Nutrition trends in some South Pacific islands

Susan Parkinson

Nutrition is a new health science in the Pacific islands. Before 1950 little was known about the effects of food on health in Pacific islands populations.

In 1949 the South Pacific Commission based in Noumea, and the South Pacific Health Service in Suva, employed nutritionists to investigate current nutritional practices as these related to health. The numerous surveys carried out by Malcolm (1951-55), Holmes (1951-55) and Langley (1952-53) indicated that poor nutrition was not a major cause of ill-health amongst women in the eastern Pacific islands. The only people suffering from nutrition-related diseases were Indian women with iron deficiency anaemia and a few others with goitre caused by lack of iodine in Fiji (Bell and Wills 1952).

During this time the majority of Pacific island women were consuming a traditional diet of root crops, fish, green leaves and coconut. Cereal-based diets were limited to the Indian, Chinese, and to smaller groups of Pacific islanders living in urban and cash cropping areas who had adopted a mixed cereal and root crop regime.

An ample traditional diet provided the Pacific islands with all the nutrients required for good health. Root and tree crops contributed a low-density source of energy together with a high proportion of essential vitamins, minerals and protein. These nutrients were supplemented by additional supplies from fish, shell fish, green leaves, coconut and fruits. These conditions existed in Kiribati, the coastal areas of Polynesia and Fiji. In the highlands of Fiji, the less varied food supply which consisted of root crops, green leaves, fruits and smaller amounts of fish, animals and birds, provided less energy and protein. Here, people were thinner and more prone to infectious diseases.

## Effects of development on nutritive value of food

Changing food habits and ways of life. Development schemes to introduce cash cropping, and the movement of villagers to urban centres which gathered momentum in the 1960s, resulted in rapidly changing food habits amongst some groups. This was associated with movement into a cash economy. A continuing nutrition study at Naduri Village, Sigatoka, Fiji (carried out by Langley) showed that people obtained 76 per cent of their energy from local foods before they took up cash crop farming. By 1963 only 63 per cent came from local foods (Wilkins 1966). More recent studies show that the consumption of local produce has declined even further.

Figure 10.1 is based on food consumption surveys carried out by the South Pacific Health Service, 1952-68, and indicates the reduction in the consumption of local produce which occurs when people moved into a cash economy. The change from root crops to cereal-based diets resulted in an increase in energy and protein and a marked decrease in needed minerals, vitamins and fibre. Iron, for example, in a good rural diet amounts to 29mg and falls to 7mg in poor urban food regimes. (The WHO recommended iron intake is 14-28mg daily.)

Urban people often derive a high proportion of energy from sugar and refined cereals. The ready acceptance of these new foods is now a cause of concern in health programs. Sugar consumption in Fiji is 39 kg per head per year or 109 grams a day.<sup>1</sup> Preliminary findings from a survey in Tuvalu<sup>2</sup> suggest that people consume 55kg of sugar per head annually.

In dietary terms, these figures indicate that a Fijian woman consuming a recommended 2200 K calories per day would receive 20 per cent of her energy in the form of sugar. Under these circumstances people are receiving a high proportion of their total energy from an 'empty food' which provides energy and no other nutrients. A high sugar intake is also a major cause of dental caries in children and adults.

The degree of change from local staple food to cereals is reflected in food balance study data which have been produced by some countries. In Fiji there has been a steady increase in the percentage of total energy derived from imported foods. In 1977 this was 43 per cent, by 1981 the figure had risen to 63.3 per cent. In 1980, Tonga<sup>3</sup> imported 30 per cent and Western Samoa<sup>4</sup>, 38 per cent

<sup>1</sup>Fiji National Nutrition Committee data, 1983.

<sup>2</sup>Pers. comm., South Pacific Commission, 1984.

<sup>3</sup>D. Duttaroy, Consumption of crops, livestock and fish in Tonga, Report to Ministry of Agriculture, 1980.

<sup>4</sup>First National Workshop on Nutrition, Western Samoa 1980, Ministry of Health and WHO.

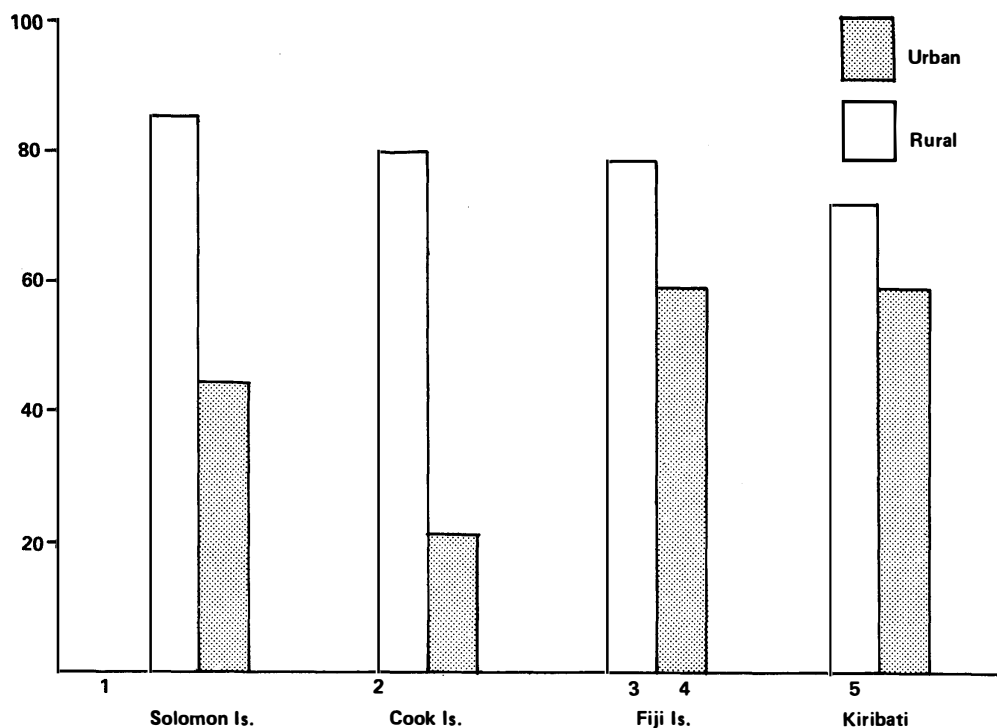


Figure 10.1 Percentage of energy derived from local foods in rural areas as shown by nutrition surveys

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1. A.A.J. Jansen and T.V. Wilmott, Nutrition Report in Rural and Urban Areas, British Solomon Islands, South Pacific Health Services, World Health Organisation Report, Suva, Fiji, 1969.
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3. D. Langley, Nutrition Survey Naduri Village, South Pacific Health Service Report, Suva, 1952.
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of their energy needs. These are dangerously high levels of food dependency for countries with a tradition of self-support, and indicate a trend to replace local staple foods with imported cereals.

### Health and change in nutrition and life-style

The eastern Pacific islands have seen dramatic changes in health status over a period of 30 years. In the 1950s infectious diseases like tuberculosis, leprosy, yaws, respiratory and intestinal infections were the main causes of mortality and morbidity. Today the situation has been altered through the control of the major infectious diseases by inoculation and antibiotics. People now live longer and the average length of a woman's life is 60-62 years in most countries (Taylor 1983).

Although life is longer, it is accompanied by high rates of nutrition-related morbidity, which place a heavy burden on health programs and a country's economy. The numerous studies of Prior *et al.* (1968-88) and Zimmet, Taylor *et al.* (1978-82) have documented the effects of changes in life-style and diet on the health of Pacific islanders. Factors which are considered to be responsible for the increase in the metabolic diseases in men and women are changes in diet, increased smoking, alcohol consumption, stress and lack of exercise.

Dietary change involves a higher intake of refined cereal foods, fats, sugar and more salt, resulting in less fibre, vitamins and minerals, more energy and protein. Most health surveys indicate a marked difference between urban and rural groups in the incidence of the 'modern' diseases. There is always a lower incidence amongst people living a more traditional rural life.

The cost of dietary change. Countries throughout the region are becoming concerned by the cost of importing increasing quantities of staple foods needed to fulfil the food demands of young populations, and the high rates of disease which accompany changing food habits place a heavy financial burden on health ministries. In addition, people who have diabetes, anaemia, high blood pressure or heart disease are unable to participate fully in the workforce and become an economic liability to the country.

In Fiji<sup>5</sup> there are 20,000 known diabetics and hospital admissions have increased fivefold in the last 30 years so that 20 per cent of all hospital beds are now occupied by people suffering from diabetes-related illness.

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<sup>5</sup>Data from Fiji Diabetic Centre, 1984.

### Nutrition-related diseases

Overweight and underweight. All bodyweight surveys have found that increase in weight takes place, particularly amongst women, when people move into town. Obesity is a health problem in Nauru, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Polynesia and Fiji. There is less obesity in Melanesian groups than amongst Polynesians and Micronesians. Some groups of women in rural Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands have very low bodyweights and a similar situation exists in Fiji Indian women. Low bodyweight results when women do not eat enough food to provide for their energy needs.

Overweight (obesity). This condition has been identified by Zimmet, Taylor and others as one of the main causes of diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease in the region. Overweight causes a strain on vital organs which is reflected by increased disease rates in adults, particularly over the age of 30 years. It has also been suggested that a high bodyweight increases the likelihood of breast cancer in post-menopausal women (de Waard *et al.* 1964).

Obesity is caused by consuming more energy than is needed for total daily activities. In former times many people lived more energetic lives and they obtained energy from the carbohydrate fruits, roots and coconuts. These foods are less concentrated in energy than cereals and have to be eaten in large amounts to provide sufficient calories. Pacific island peoples tend to transfer their need for a large volume of food to the more energy-concentrated cereals, and this is a major cause of obesity, particularly in women.

Another dangerous trend is the replacement of the flavouring foods, green leaves, fish and coconuts, usually eaten with the staple, by cups of black tea sweetened with sugar. Nowadays biscuits, bread or rice with black tea and sugar often replace a meal of taro, green leaves and fish.

Diabetes. Medical research all over the world has found that the prevalence of diabetes is closely related to abnormally high excess bodyweight in populations. Obesity seems to be a diabetogenic factor in those who are genetically susceptible to the disease (Baird 1973). Diabetic tendencies may remain dormant in lean people who eat a vegetable-type diet which is high in fibre and adequate in energy. However, when this is exchanged for a modern food regime high in energy and low in fibre, the ensuing rapid gain in weight may precipitate the onset of the disease. This situation is well demonstrated in the Pacific islands where the incidence of this disease varies between 10 and 30 per cent in the overweight urban populations of Nauru, Cook Islands, Western Samoa, Tonga and Fiji (Coyne 1981).

Table 10.1 gives some indication of the prevalence of diabetes in women, who appear to be more vulnerable than men.

Table 10.1

Diabetes: percentage incidence in men and women  
as shown by regional surveys

Country		Males		Females	
		Number	%	Number	%
Nauru (1)	Urban	217	31	239	30
Western Samoa (1)	Rural	358	2	387	5
	Urban	325	9	419	9
Tuvalu (1)		189	1	208	7
Niue (2)			n.a.	518	9
Kiribati (3)	Rural	417	3	560	3
	Urban	907	9	973	9
Fiji <sup>a</sup> (4)	<u>Rural</u>				
	Fijians	486	1		2
	Indians	434	12		6
	<u>Urban</u>				
	Fijians	877	4		6
	Indians	850	12		11

<sup>a</sup>Combined male and female percentages corrected to nearest number.

Sources:

1. P. Zimmet, R. Taylor and S. Whitehouse, 'Prevalence rates of impaired glucose tolerance and diabetes mellitus in various Pacific populations according to the new WHO criteria, *WHO Bull.* 60(1), 1981.
2. R. Taylor and J. Whitmore, Report on Women's Health Survey in Niue, South Pacific Commission, Noumea, 1983.
3. P. Zimmet, R. Taylor, H. King, W. Geddes and H. Partgeter, Kiribati Diabetes and Cardiovascular Survey, Report to Government, 1981.
4. P. Zimmet and G. Sloman. Assignment Report. Prevention and Control of Diseases, World Health Organisation Report ICP/CVD Suva, Fiji, 1980.

High blood pressure. This condition has been well described in the region during the last fifteen years by Zimmet, Taylor, Prior and others. There is definite evidence to show that people living in rural situations tend to have lower blood pressure than those in towns. Contributing causes of this disease are obesity, increased salt consumption and a stressful environment. Males and females seem to be equally vulnerable to high blood pressure. A high consumption of imported refined carbohydrate foods and salty canned fish and meat are dietary factors which lead to the higher incidence in urban populations. The rate of this disease, as found by various surveys in Pacific countries, is shown in Table 10.2.

Cardiovascular disease. In recent years this has become the leading cause of death in Fiji. This was also reported to be the second leading cause of death in Guam, Palau and other Micronesian territories in 1972-77 (Coyne 1981). Heart disease in Pacific islands has been associated by Beaglehole *et al.* (1980) with westernization. Important contributing factors are obesity, a high consumption of refined foods, alcohol, lack of exercise and smoking. The disease is more prevalent in men. Women comprised 28 per cent of the people treated for heart disease in Fiji in 1981.

Anaemia. During the last thirty years this disease has become very common in Pacific islands' women. M. Bell and L. Wills surveyed the incidence of this disease in Fijian and Indian women in 1949. They found a 3 per cent occurrence in Fijian women and 28 per cent in Indians. In a statement in 1984 the World Health Organisation estimated that 72 per cent of all Fiji women have haemoglobin levels below normal. In other parts of Oceania they estimate that 70 per cent of all women have low haemoglobin levels.

Anaemia is a 'silent' disease which can go unnoticed for a long time. It is always most prevalent in women, particularly during adolescence, and in pregnancy and lactation, when needs for blood-building nutrients, particularly iron, are greater. The onset of iron-deficiency anaemia can take up to one year on a deficient diet. For this reason some women may not notice the gradual decline in energy. Anaemia can be caused by loss of blood, malaria, parasite infection, frequent pregnancies and a poor diet. The World Health Organisation considers that 96 per cent of all the anaemia in the world is due to lack of iron in food and poor absorption.

The ability to absorb iron from food is dependent on numerous factors. These include the presence of animal protein and Vitamin C in the diet, the absence of some substances in food which render iron salts insoluble and difficult to absorb, and low internal parasite levels.

An average traditional island diet was naturally rich in iron and vitamins. In most coastal areas readily available fish

Table 10.2  
Hypertension: percentage incidence in men and  
women as shown by regional surveys

Country		Males		Females	
		Number	%	Number	%
Nauru (1)	Urban	299	36	388	20
Kiribati (2)	Rural	474	12	504	10
	Urban	919	14	981	10
Fiji <sup>a</sup> (3)	<u>Rural</u>				
	Fijian	486	2		8
	Indian	434	7		6
	<u>Urban</u>				
	Fijian	877	8		9
	Indian	434	9		8
Cook Is. (4)	Rural	188	3	191	7
	Urban	242	28	288	47
W. Samoa (1)	Rural	358	18	387	16
Niue (5)	Combined rural/urban	577	10	615	10

<sup>a</sup> Combined male and female. Percentage corrected to nearest number.

Sources:

1. P. Zimmet, L. Jackson and S. Whitehouse, 'Blood pressure studies in two Pacific populations with varying degrees of modernisation', *N.Z. Medical Journal*, 91:249-52, 1980.
2. P. Zimmet, R. Taylor, H. King, W. Geddes and K. Partgeter, The Kiribati Diabetes and Cardiovascular Diseases Survey Report, WHO Collaborating Centre for Epidemiology of Diabetes, Royal Southern Memorial Hospital, Melbourne, Australia, 1980.
3. P. Zimmet and G. Sloman, Assignment Report. Prevention and Control of Diseases, World Health Organisation Report ICP/CVD/001 Suva, Fiji, 1980.
4. I.A. Prior, T.G. Evans and H.P. Harvey, 'Sodium intake and blood pressure in two Polynesian populations', *New England Medical Journal*, 279:515-20, 1968.
5. R. Taylor and J. Whitmore, Women's Health Survey in Niue, South Pacific Commission Report, Noumea, 1981.

or shell fish provided people with protein several times a week. Coconut cream was the only food which might have reduced iron absorption through reducing solubility.

Rural cash cropping. The modern diet eaten by low income groups in towns often provides much less iron and the necessary vitamins - C, B12 and folic acid. Furthermore, the presence of tannic acid from black tea, and phytic acid which is found to occur in some canned foods, inhibits the absorption of iron.

Table 10.3 shows the difference in nutritive value between a good traditional-type Pacific island diet and that of a poor cash regime. It will be seen that all the blood building nutrients, apart from protein, are drastically reduced when people move to an imported diet.

Table 10.3  
Nutritional value of typical diets of urban  
and rural women<sup>a</sup>

Nutrients	Good traditional diet <sup>b</sup>	Poor cash <sup>c</sup>	Recommended nutrient level <sup>d</sup>
Energy K calories (no.)	2060	2183	2200
Total protein (g)	53	51	55
Iron (mg)	29	6.7	14-28
Vitamin C (mg)	210	25	30
Vitamin B12 (ug)	3	1.7	2
Folic acid (ug)	579	95	200

<sup>a</sup>Dietary data based on nutrition surveys undertaken by South Pacific Health Service in the region.

<sup>b</sup>Foods used: root crops, fish, shell fish, coconut, green leaves, fruit.

<sup>c</sup>Foods used: rice, biscuits, sugar, tinned fish, green leaves, butter, milk.

<sup>d</sup>FAO recommended levels for adult woman (1972).

Diagnosis of anaemia. During the last thirty years numerous surveys in the region have yielded information which is often difficult to interpret because of the different techniques used to determine levels of blood haemoglobin and disagreement as to the level which should be considered normal. Modern research now accepts the WHO recommendation that normal blood should contain 11.5 grams of haemoglobin per 100 ml. Mild anaemia is said to

exist when levels drop to 10g, and severe, when there is less than 8.9 grams.

Table 10.4 shows modern trends in this disease amongst groups of Pacific island women. It will be noted that the most recent surveys indicate an upward trend in the incidence of the disease. This is confirmed by the WHO 1982 estimated percentage of women with low haemoglobin levels in the region.

Table 10.4

Anaemia: percentage incidence in women as shown  
by regional surveys

Country		Number of people	Total % anaemic (non-classified)
Fiji (1)	Indian } pregnant	512	21
	Fijian }	500	11
Fiji (2)	<u>Adults</u>	4941 <sup>a</sup>	
	Indian		33
	Fijian		8
	<u>Adolescents</u>		
	Indian	n.a.	30
	Fijian	n.a.	14
Fiji (3)	<u>Adults</u>		
	Indian	895	40
		934	36
Samoa (4)		408	52
Tonga (5)	From ante-natal clinics	n.a.	29 (18% mild, 11% moderate)
			20 (13% mild, 7% moderate)
Solomons (5)		n.a.	
Niue (6)		508	6 (4% mild, 2% moderate)
Regional - estimated (7)			72

<sup>a</sup>Total number men and women.

(Sources next page)

Sources:

1. J.T. Cassidy, Report to Director of Medical Services 4/12/68, WHH File 13/10 (mimeographed), 1968.
2. J.G. Buchanan, 'A haematological survey of the Fijian population', paper at annual scientific meeting, Royal Australasian College of Physicians, Auckland, 1976.
3. P. Ram, A.S. Parmar and B.K. Tha, 'Haemoglobin levels in healthy adults', *Fiji Medical Journal*, November 1968.
4. H.D. Weerasinghe, Nutritional Surveillance Data for Western Samoa, WHO Suva, 1980.
5. H.D. Weerasinghe, Assignment Report, WHO Suva, 1979.
6. R. Taylor and T. Whitmore, Niue Study of Womens' Health, South Pacific Commission, 1984.
7. WHO, 'World health statistics No.2', *Quarterly Review*, 1982.

Breast feeding and the health of mother and child

Traditionally Pacific island women breast fed their babies for at least two and more often four years. This provided the child with a clean and regular supply of protein and an immunity to infectious diseases. In addition, continuous breast feeding gave women some degree of protection from pregnancy. Successful breast feeding is the outcome of good maternal nutrition.

Breast feeding and development. The breast feeding of infants is considered by all organizations involved with development and health (FAO, WHO, UNICEF) to be one of the most important factors contributing to the health of young children. The practice is supported worldwide by the WHO primary health care programs, in FAO promoted national food planning policies, and by UNICEF in nutrition education schemes.

A survey of breast feeding patterns in the South Pacific (Weir 1984) shows that economic development is often accompanied by a reduction in breast feeding amongst women. There is less breast feeding amongst urban and peri-urban women, with accompanying higher rates of diarrhoeal disease in infants. This trend occurs in all countries.

Studies in all developing countries show that breast-fed babies are less likely to require hospital care. Records collected by the Fiji Ministry of Health in 1977-80 showed that the number

of wholly breast-fed babies had fallen from 44 per cent to 31 per cent. Over this period cases of infant diarrhoea increased from 9442 to 12,830. Diarrhoea is a major cause of infant malnutrition and breast feeding is the most effective preventive measure.

The economic advantages of breast feeding lie in reducing the costs of imported formula milks (in Fiji these cost the country \$1 million annually) and in lowered infant morbidity rates.

Rapid social change over the last twenty years has imposed more work responsibility on mothers. No longer do they have the same support from relatives and teenage children in cooking, home and child care. Sotutu (pers. comm., 1984) says that Fijian village women are now fishing and gardening 3 months after a birth. Rokosawa (1978) found pregnant and lactating women working in the Fiji cane fields. Continuous hard work in the field leaves little time for feeding a baby. In addition, women have been encouraged to bottle feed by the continuous promotion of formula milks by overseas companies.

All Ministries of Health throughout the region recognize the importance of breast feeding, but little practical help is given to women to make this possible. Working women cannot get time off to feed their babies. Maternity leave varies from 80 days in Fiji to one month in Tonga and Samoa. In countries where a high proportion of all civil servants are women (48 per cent in Western Samoa), governments consider a longer maternity leave to be a threat to the economy.

#### Some fundamental problems in development which cause women to change food practices

Food habits in any society reflect changing conditions in a community. The following problems have been observed by field-workers in the region to have accelerated dietary change.

Food preparation. Most of the Pacific islands' dishes are labour intensive and take time to make, and this is the main reason why traditional recipes are now only prepared for feasts.

In some societies the use of appropriate technology has reduced the food preparation time and thereby increased the consumption of certain foods. A good example comes from Kiribati where the hand mincing machine is used to grind hard fruits to make traditional puddings like *te buatoro*. Similarly, food preservation in the Pacific islands suffers from a lack of modern equipment. Hand-powered grating and slicing machines, and suitable food driers, would make it possible for women to preserve more surplus crops like breadfruit.

More attention needs to be given to reducing the labour of food preparation through extension education. Old techniques need to be properly studied and modern alternatives suggested and scientifically tested. Island dishes which include grated and pounded staple foods such as the *vakalolo* of Fiji, the *kurure taro* of the Cooks, and *taufolu* of Samoa, are well suited to commercial production. Small food industries could make available to urban populations nutritious dishes made from local produce. A successful *poi*-making industry has been flourishing in Hawaii for many years. The survival of this labour-intensive processed food is entirely due to the commercialization of production.

Cooking. The output of labour involved in food preparation has not changed over the years. Formerly, cooking — in the earth oven (*umu*, *lovo*, etc.) — was the work of men. The family earth oven provided an excellent way of cooking a variety of different foods at one time. Small quantities of fish, edible insects, vegetables and nuts could be packaged and cooked with the main foods. The decline in the use of the earth oven has been a factor in reducing the variety of foods consumed, and as cooking in pots, considered women's work, has become more common, so has women's workload increased. Women now collect the fuel, prepare and cook the food. Variety in meals is often restricted by the number of cooking pots and space on the fire. It is usual for families to cook a pot of staple food and one of vegetables, fish or meat. Too often the accompanying 'relish' becomes a pot of black tea.

In her studies of rural energy use in Fiji, Siwatibau (1981) found 92 per cent of households used wood for fuel. Women interviewed said that wood collecting was hard and time-consuming work. Their other objections to open fire cooking were the smoke irritation to the eyes and lungs and the blackening of pots.

Improved cooking stoves are needed to reduce labour, conserve dwindling fuel wood supplies, and to increase the variety of foods served at family meals. Attempts by the South Pacific Commission, UNDP, and Energy Departments in islands governments to provide smokeless stoves have received very low priority in government budgets. In Fiji, a planned national wood stove project was discontinued when the Ministry of Energy revised its policy on rural energy to the promotion of electricity rather than wood fuel.

Food for rural people. In all countries rural women are still the gatherers of river or sea foods, green leaves and some staple crops. A major problem in some rural situations is the increasing distance of food gardens from villages. This is often worsened by locating cash crops and cattle projects on good garden land near villages (Slatter 1984). In Fiji, all rural development projects stress the need to allocate land for food gardens, but this does not take into account provision for necessary shifting cultivation or, alternatively, agricultural advice on the intensive horticultural methods needed to raise subsistence food crops on smaller

areas of land. Because there is less fresh food in cash cropping areas, people replace local staples with imported cereals.

Food for times of scarcity. Provision of supplies for times of shortage was an important part of traditional food production. A wise farmer planned to have crops underground during the hurricane season. This was an essential part of Tongan agricultural planning (Moengangongo 1983). In addition, large quantities of staple crops were preserved by fermentation or drying in most countries. Food preservation on a large scale ceased about thirty years ago in Fiji. The reason given by villagers was that imported food aid took the place of locally preserved food.

Food aid on a limited scale has a place in disaster relief, but the enormous quantities sent to countries are sufficient to feed small island populations for many months and sometimes for a year. During this time children grow up with a liking for imported cereals and they do not want to eat root crops. This is considered to be a serious cause of changing food habits (Malolo and Borrelli 1982).

Food for town people. In the rapidly growing urban centres not enough thought is given to establishing food outlets in positions convenient to housing estates. Trips to main central markets of Suva, Port Moresby and, to a lesser extent, Apia, are costly and time consuming. Furthermore, food is often marketed in units which are unsuitable for good storage in small urban kitchens.

In all countries agricultural policy pays little attention to the provision of good quality fresh food for the rapidly increasing urban populations. The main priority of agriculture is to produce cash crops for export. Very little attention is given to helping the subsistence farmer increase his output. In spite of this, Shaw (1983) says the subsistence agricultural industry in the region produces 70 per cent of the food and employs the greatest number of people. 'Quite an achievement', he comments, 'considering the low level of Government support'.

There is a universal consensus amongst countries that self-sufficiency in food is a desirable goal but little is being done to make this possible. The emphasis on exports is so great that national food supplies appear to be forgotten.

The high cost of local food. The high cost of fresh local food in relation to wage levels is a serious deterrent to the consumption of a nutritious local diet by many urban people. The price of 1000 K calories in Tonga and Fiji calculated by the author in 1983 is shown in Table 10.5.

In both countries white flour provided one of the cheapest sources of energy. This has the added advantage of being easy to prepare, it stores well and needs little fuel for cooking — all

important considerations for urban women. In addition, the prices of imported cereals are often controlled, whereas there are wide fluctuations in the market price of local staple foods. In 1983 there was a 50 per cent fluctuation in the cost of energy from cassava, the main staple root crop of Fiji.

Table 10.5

Cost of Fijian dollars for 1000 K calories from  
staple foods in 1983

Foodstuffs	Tonga	Fiji
Bread	0.33	0.30
Flour	0.15	0.10
Rice	0.31	0.16
Taro	0.20	0.43
Cassava	0.10	0.23

Poor nutrition from some local food industries. Some of the most successful food industries in the region produce non-nutritious snacks, soft drinks, biscuits, sweets and beer. Snack foods are a danger to all ages because of the high salt and energy content and low nutritive value. The ever increasing consumption of soft drinks and sweets contributes to obesity and dental caries in children.

Alcohol consumption has increased in all countries, and particularly in those with breweries. Alcohol-related crime is responsible for large numbers of prison inmates. Beer drinking on a large scale is a cause of obesity in men and reduces many pay packets which should provide the family food. A study of alcohol consumption in three Pacific countries in the period 1971-79 reveals a 78 per cent increase in imports into Nauru, 63 per cent into Kiribati and 23 per cent into Niue (Coyne 1981).

A new hazard to nutrition has come with the fast food industry. The snack and fast food companies are either attached to multi-national food industries or hold franchises. They are therefore in a position to advertise widely and provide a threat to the survival of local snack foods and cafes.

### Discussion

The nutrition of people living in a traditional situation is the outcome of thousands of years' experience based on prevailing economic conditions, agricultural and food preparation practices, cultural beliefs and disease patterns. Change brought about by development programs in many countries disrupts local

food systems and often results in malnutrition (Bingham and Hines 1983).

Many agricultural development projects in South Pacific countries are planned by overseas experts and local advisory committees which consist of chiefs or head men, agriculturalists, a man from the government and sometimes one or two villagers. Women are never included. Because the developers need to supervise the intended crop closely, it is often located near the village. Women watch with dismay as their traditional food gardens are ploughed under for coffee or cocoa while they are told food crops and fuel woods can now be moved further away from the village, often onto marginal land.

The village store which always accompanies development projects now takes over the provision of many basic food supplies. Increased difficulties in obtaining fuel woods and local foods cause women to turn to kerosene cookers, flour, rice and sugar. In towns, the high cost of fuel and local foods, in addition to the poor distribution of fresh food markets, are some of the reasons for an increased consumption of cereal foods and sugar.

The health effects of sudden change from a traditional food regime to one based on refined cereals, canned foods, sugar and lesser quantities of local produce have already been discussed. Zimmet, Taylor and others (see sources for Table 10.2) recommend an improved diet as being an important factor in the prevention of the metabolic diseases now prevalent in all countries. The basis of this recommendation is an increased consumption of locally grown foods and a reduced dependence on imported cereals, sugar, fat and alcohol.

In order to carry out such a recommendation far-reaching changes in economic and education planning need to take place. The first involves giving a higher priority to the production of staple foods to feed the people at home, instead of overseas. In rural areas more attention needs to be given to increasing the production of local foods on smaller holdings. This requires the re-training of agricultural personnel in intensive traditional horticultural procedures. In addition, the requirements of farmers for good land for food cropping near villages should take priority over requirements for cash crops.

In towns, improved nutrition is largely dependent on the availability of local staple foods at a price reasonably comparable with that of imported cereals. Price supports for local produce and tariffs on imported foods might be necessary to bring this about.

There are many instances in the South Pacific of failure of local food production projects because no thought has been given to the disposal of seasonal surpluses. Attention might be

given to the drying of staple carbohydrate crops to make starch, flours and animal foods. Small food businesses could also be encouraged to provide local dishes for town people. This, in particular, would provide employment opportunities for women.

The problem of feeding people in times of disaster needs attention from governments. The present system of providing liberal amounts of imported foods removes any incentive for farmers to practise traditional methods of food storage. Agricultural policy must encourage farmers to plan crops for times of disaster and to preserve surpluses. Imported food aid for disaster should be carefully monitored so that it does not provide a disincentive to farmers and develop dependency on overseas food supplies.

The education systems in all countries have done little to fit women to manage modern roles in town or village. Many school curriculae are based on the requirements of overseas examinations. Little attention is given to assisting children to acquire knowledge and skills which would help them survive in their own environment. Many modern school children do not have the time to acquire knowledge from their elders, and few education systems encourage this. The result is that they do not learn the important skills related to traditional food production and use, and are therefore not able to adapt well-tried ideas to the needs of modern living.

Having left school, the young girl has few opportunities to obtain information which will help her with the health, hygiene, economic and other problems of modern village or town life. The non-formal extension programs for women usually stress sewing and cooking and gardening, whereas the changing roles of women demand that they have knowledge and skills related to appropriate technology, business management, agriculture, nutrition, food use, health, sex education and social problems – particularly those related to alcohol.

Curriculum guidelines for courses to assist women with these needs have been developed by Slatter (1983) for the South Pacific Commission Community Education Centre. It is to be hoped that the Centre's new curriculum will rapidly assist women in these new areas of knowledge.

In the field of health, women need support in their desire to breast feed their babies. A basic requirement is leave from work to carry out this important function. The economic advantages of healthy infants fed on home produced food needs recognition in food policy planning.

Little research has been carried out to ascertain the causes of the two nutrition-related diseases of women in the region – anaemia and obesity. The methods used to diagnose these diseases should follow recommended WHO procedures. This would make it possible to interpret regional trends and to recommend sound prevention programs.

## Conclusion

Economic development in South Pacific countries has brought about changes in life-style and food consumption of many people. Available information suggests that women are more vulnerable to anaemia and diabetes. The high rates of the 'new diseases' have been attributed to changing life-styles and the replacement of good quality local foods with imported substitutes of lower nutritional value. Many countries now spend a significant proportion of overseas funds on imported foods which influence disease rates. There is a need to link the cost of ill-health to national food policies. Practical problems involving land use, the work of women, food use and availability, influence the diet which women provide for their families. The involvement of women in development plans might help reduce these problems.

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# **WOMEN IN BUSINESS**





Access to development finance

R.V. Cole

Bank credit for commercial, agricultural and industrial purposes has been available in most islands of the Pacific almost from the time of annexation or settlement by colonial powers. It has been important for the development of the natural resources of the islands and has survived changing economic and political circumstances to remain a vital feature of the development of the independent island nations today. Credit has not, however, always been as widely or readily available as might be socially desirable, being confined to those with assets to pledge as security and to merchants with trading links in and beyond the islands. This restriction was largely because bankers in the islands followed the traders and were extensions of metropolitan banks, nervous of dealing with customers whose social backgrounds and antecedents differed from their own. The banking system was scarcely known, let alone available, to any but a few of the members of the indigenous population of the islands until well after the effects of World War II on the Pacific islands had passed. Indeed, it was not until the advent of the state-owned development finance institutions (DFIs) that local populations were encouraged to consider the possibility of utilizing borrowed money as a means of assisting their efforts to develop individual or corporate enterprises. While DFIs in the Pacific have, in recent years, made very real efforts (not always successful) to encourage and educate indigenous populations in the advantages and responsibilities of credit in economic enterprise development, these efforts have usually been directed at the male population. This has probably not been intentional, but as the main thrust of lending was, initially, in agriculture, and as this was seen as a male preserve — at least as far as commercial agriculture was concerned — the male orientation was inevitable. As lending moved into the field of transportation — trucks, buses, outboard motors — the male client was sought out, so that today male clients predominate.

This paper is not concerned with why people borrow, except perhaps as this affects the structure of borrowing. If it was, the reason for women seeking credit to support income-raising activities is probably best summarized by Ruth Pfanner who said:

'In most countries, women's income is used for food and basic necessities'. The effect of income, she suggested, is 'usually increased consumption and better nutrition'.<sup>1</sup> As traditional societies in the Pacific region change, so the need for income is reinforced. This in turn will stimulate demand for credit in a readily accessible form.

This paper takes a step back and looks at the availability of credit as an adjunct to income-raising activities by women in the South Pacific. Before examining the availability of, and conditions relating to, credit it is worth recalling that credit is not an end in itself in the development process. Credit might best be described as a 'facilitator' and it must be recognized that there are many stages to be gone through before credit can be applied to an undertaking and help it move from a dream to reality. It is also important to recognize that credit does not just occur, that loans or overdrafts provided by banks or DFIs to customers are linked with savings or deposits which enable the credit institution to make purchasing power available to an approved customer. Credit enables a producer of goods or services to bridge the gap between production and sale and allows consumers to purchase goods and services out of future income. Credit is therefore an important tool available to governments, allowing them to increase production and/or consumption by expanding the availability of credit. The converse may also apply: a contraction of credit may reduce production and/or consumption. Governments of developing island countries may borrow from multilateral bodies, e.g. World Bank or Asian Development Bank, to create credit facilities for their national DFI. In doing this they must remain aware of the fact that their borrowings, and borrowing by individual DFI customers, must be repaid out of real resources, and also that too casual a regard for the expansion or contraction of credit by the government or DFI may set off an inflationary or deflationary situation with serious national consequences. If Pacific island governments are seriously concerned to stimulate growth in their economies, in real terms they must stimulate growth by all means at their disposal. This may range from the encouragement of transnational corporations to simple home-based industry. While the latter may not, on an individual basis, cause any dramatic change in the growth of the national economy, collective effort spurred by a sensible national credit policy would provide valuable and positive support for national effort.

In a typical situation, what does a banker look for before giving approval for a 'credit line' to be opened? Take for example a dress-making business:

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<sup>1</sup>Ruth Pfanner, 'Income generating activities in rural areas' in Lyn Melville (ed.), *Women, Aid and Development: Proceedings of a Workshop*, Melbourne, Women and Development Network, 1984.

- Is there a market for the proposed line of production – will it meet demand, that is, is it up to current fashion needs and can the management keep pace with the changing whims of the consumers?
- Are raw materials of the right quality and quantity available?
- Is there sufficient skilled labour available to cut, sew and package the product?
- Is management able to control production, assess the quality of the finished product, handle labour and other matters that will arise in the conduct of business?
- Given that all answers to the matter of processing are positive, then the questions are: can the borrower repay the loan or, alternatively, if the business should fail, what fall-back position does the banker have to secure his loan? In most developing countries this vexing question of 'security' is often the least understood and most misrepresented: but one must remember that ultimately money borrowed has to be repaid for relending and that, in the case of Pacific DFIs, it belongs to the state, and if not repaid the people collectively are the losers. In this same category as security is the often made mistake of equating turnover with profit. Customers, time and again, make the mistake of thinking they are doing well when money is flowing into the business, without realizing that margins between a profit and a loss situation are often very slender. It is this margin which must constantly be monitored to ensure that the business is viable and able to meet its obligations.

In this paper we look at the broad sweep of Pacific DFIs and how they regard the question of credit for women customers; the case of the Fiji Development Bank (FDB) and its particular relations with women borrowers; a case study of a business set up to determine whether women in a male dominated cash economy can succeed in light industry; barriers faced by women in borrowing for income-raising activities; and steps to be taken, if necessary, to help women customers of DFIs improve their access to credit for development purposes.

DFIs of the South Pacific have one major feature in common: their range of opportunities to apply credit to economic development is very diverse, with lending for almost any type of commercial enterprise falling within existing policies. The result of this open policy is fine from the point of view of governments anxious to use credit to stimulate private sector growth, but it can create management problems for bankers whose technical knowledge has to span enterprises from those involving anything from

wood chip mills to sewing machines. Because of the complexity of their operations, Pacific DFIs play a valuable role in island development. The following summaries of bank activity with reference to lending to women clients have been provided by DFIs in response to written requests, and are acknowledged with appreciation.

Development Bank of Western Samoa (DBWS)

- No specific policy of encouraging women clients, but the board welcomes staff involvement in projects and programs geared to women's participation.
- A staff of ninety includes thirty women, among whom are a senior security officer, a senior accountant and nine loans officers.
- Lending to women covers a wide range of industrial and agricultural activities (see Appendix A); 8 per cent of all industrial and 10 per cent of all agricultural loans are to women.
- The bank's experience is that in loan preparation and in the understanding of obligations men and women do not differ greatly, but in their attitude to repayments and in cooperation with bank staff women are more responsible.
- Women borrow to earn incomes to support families but often lack basic skills and knowledge of bank requirements. Men dominate meetings with extension staff of government departments and the bank.
- There is a need for greater effort to assist women in commercial/agricultural activities in order to increase their awareness of the ability of DBWS to assist them with credit in the implementation of projects.

Development Bank of Solomon Islands (DBSI)

- There is no policy of discrimination between sexes in lending and no special effort to encourage women to borrow.
- Twenty-five per cent of staff are female, including one loans officer and one securities officer.
- Loans to women are mainly in the rural sector (see Appendix B).
- Women appreciate obligations created by borrowing better than men.

- Traditionally, women have not been involved in business activity so those who seek loans are persons who have experienced employment in government or the private sector of the economy.

#### Papua New Guinea Development Bank (PNGDB)

- The bank works within government policy guidelines which call for a rapid increase in the active and equal participation of women in all types of economic and social activity.
- The bank does not discriminate against or in favour of women in its lendings. Loans range from those for sewing machines to road-making equipment, cattle and cocoa projects. The criterion for loan approval is the likelihood of success of the applicant rather than the sex.

#### National Development Bank of Palau

- Only recently commenced operations and, of a staff numbering three, two are women.
- Two loans to women for a restaurant and a tailoring business have been approved.

#### Business Development Advisory Bureau, Tuvalu (BUDAB)

- No discrimination shown towards either male or female customers.
- Of the staff of two, one is a woman.
- BUDAB provides marketing advice in respect of local handicrafts.
- Loans have been made to women for an ice cream outlet, cafeteria and a fishing venture.
- Women are keen to use credit to develop joint ventures and single person operations but lack management and financial skills. They have problems in developing loan proposals but are enthusiastic.

#### Tonga Development Bank (TDB)

- One-third of the staff is female; one is Finance Manager, another is Chief Clerk (Acting) Administration.

- No special policies favouring women clients. Women are involved mainly in trade stores, sewing, hotel operations, handicrafts and restaurants.
- Women tend to concentrate on domestic activity.

#### Niue Development Finance Fund

- Women are treated no differently from men customers.
- Government has a policy of encouraging industrial development which applies equally to women.
- Three female customers are involved in garment making, agriculture and manufacturing.

#### National Loans Board, Kiribati

- Makes commercial loans available regardless of sex, but as yet no interest has been displayed by women in commercial activity involving loan finance.
- There is a need to educate women to be more independent and this will involve a break with custom.

#### Fiji Development Bank (FDB): a case study

Fiji's Eighth Development Plan makes specific reference to 'Women and Development' indicating that 'with the process of social and economic development, the role of women inevitably changes requiring adjustments within the family and society as a whole. It is government policy to ensure that women are integrated into the national development process as equal partners with men, within the general framework of non-discrimination'.

The Fiji Development Bank, like others throughout the South Pacific, has no special policy directed towards support for women in the development process where this involves credit or finance. There is, however, some government recognition for the special place of women in the economy with the establishment of a Women's Interest Office which caters for particular problems of women in relation to the training of people in rural areas. The office has indicated that its activities should be broadened beyond home economics and handicrafts to include the organization and management of business and commercial undertakings. This expansion, which is directed at Fijian women, could be undertaken in association with the Fijian Business Opportunity and Management Advisory Service (BOMAS).

BOMAS was established in 1971 to assist Fijian entrepreneurs through the provision of financial management and advisory services.

Its operations were closely geared to the lending activities of the Fiji Development Bank which, at the same time, established a commercial and industrial loans scheme specifically directed towards the encouragement of indigenous Fijians in commercial and industrial activities. BOMAS placed particular emphasis on training in book-keeping and low-level management functions in the knowledge that the failure of many Fijian businesses stemmed from inadequate business training. To a degree, this service has been available to Fijian women, but without any particular bias towards female entrepreneurs the facilities offered by BOMAS have tended, as with the general operations of FDB, to be directed towards the male clientele.

A simple breakdown of current loans to Fijian women in the Central Division indicates the following:

- Industrial loans (ranging from boat building to heavy earth moving businesses) - 5 loans.
- Transport (mainly taxi loans) - 13 loans.
- Service industries (ranging from tailoring to secretarial services) - 18 loans.
- Restaurant/snack bar activities - 8 loans.
- Tourist businesses - 3 loans.
- Commercial lending (mainly associated with tourist trade) - 11 loans.

Like most development banks in the region, FDB has not paid specific attention to women customers, although it recognizes that their borrowing is probably undertaken by women to supplement family income, by widows or sole parents who need to earn income to support their family, and that these reasons are different from those given by men. Statistics provided by the bank reveal that on average over the last five years 4 per cent of the bank's lending by number and 3 per cent of loans by value have gone to women customers. This means that, in 1983, of loans approved totalling \$16 million (in number terms 2167) only \$700,000 went to women customers (110 loans by number). In rather more detail for 1983 by lending sector, Table 11.1 records the strong bias towards male clients, either in terms of individuals or male-dominated corporate bodies. While these figures are at first sight rather depressing, it must be realized that the total figure relates to both individual and corporate lending and that in money terms the latter must predominate over the individual customer. Nonetheless, given that Fiji is probably the leading country in terms of lending to female clients, the imbalance more than suggests that the reasons for the lag should be identified. Steps can then be taken to promote greater lending to female clients.

Table 11.1

Loans made by Fiji Development Bank, by sector, 1983

Sector	Women		Total		Women as a percentage	
	Number	Value (F\$'000)	number	Value (F\$'000)	By number	By value
Agriculture	72	435	1590	6647	4	6
Industrial	17	188	235	7942	7	2
Commercial	21	77	342	1562	6	5
Total	110	700	2167	16151	5	4

Note: Commercial loans are restricted to indigenous Fijians.

The establishment of a female entrepreneur: a case study

This case study briefly reviews one experience in the establishment of a small manufacturing industry with female management. (The experience could of course apply equally to a male client.) A development bank in the South Pacific was concerned to establish a technique for the development of small-scale industrial undertakings by indigenous entrepreneurs. Having noted the absence of females in such a role the bank decided that such development, if possible, would involve management and operational supervision by women. The bank's projects department identified and researched the need for an umbrella-making operation and prepared a project document after research in an overseas country to ensure that techniques to be applied were both appropriate and in line with modern practice. Once the operational aspects had been fully planned, management sought to find an appropriate manager and, having identified a suitable woman, established a company which was 95 per cent owned by the bank and 5 per cent owned by the selected manager-in-training.

Because of the particular economic and industrial position of the country in question, all raw materials and machinery had to be imported, with local staff being responsible for the processing of raw materials and the marketing of the finished product. Initially, the manufacturing process went remarkably well because of its relative simplicity. Local staff under the direction of the female manager achieved high levels of output and the product, which was under careful quality control, quickly gained acceptance in the local market. One of the major concerns which the company had to face was competition from imported equivalents, but this was overcome by a high profile marketing campaign which stressed the 'indigenous' nature of the product (remembering that raw

materials had to be imported and the product was actually an assembly operation).

Aside from the supervision of the manufacturing process, the manager was required to undertake marketing of the product, including visits to retail and wholesale agents throughout the country, and an overseas sales trip to identify and secure markets for the product in an adjacent metropolitan country.

For the first six months or so of the operation, management was beyond reproach, with enthusiasm ensuring high level supervision, quality control, and effective marketing. As with most industrial processing, the manufacture of umbrellas is dull, repetitive and lacking in glamour. Marketing the product, for management, was a far more interesting process than control of accounts and staff on the factory floor. Gradually interest in the production side of the business declined. This was followed by a decline in output, quality control fell and so did consumer interest in the product. Orders could not be met, packing left much to be desired, income fell: the classic ills of a badly managed and ailing corporation began to emerge.

Because of the bank shareholding and commitment the operation was not allowed to fail, but its future was only secured by heavy inputs from the major shareholder and its eventual sale to a third party.

The lessons learnt by the bank were valuable: supervision and close involvement by management in the shop floor operation are fundamental to the success of a small manufacturing business; selling the product is important but profits are made just as much in the manufacturing process as they are in the selling process; sex is not important in management but dedication, commitment and loyalty are fundamentals of a successful business.

#### Lending to women: are there problems?

What then are the realities to be faced by women interested in having access to credit in order to develop a personal or joint venture business? Does a female client of a DFI have to overcome particular problems in her approach to development through the use of credit?

(i) Most women have family commitments of one sort or another which vie for their attention and compete for the time available to establish and operate a business. When a business venture requires a fair amount of planning before it can be submitted to bankers for their consideration, and this is not available, it is inevitable that a badly designed submission is made. This often starts the female client off on the wrong foot with her bankers who may then describe their female clientele as indecisive and casual in their approach to bank finance.

(ii) Because of preconceived ideas flowing from earlier times women are still largely ignored by the extension services of governments, particularly in agriculture and business development. This situation is often not helped by men who tend to be responsible for organizing meetings and visits by extension staff and regard women as only useful in providing meals for their government guests.

This view is supported by the findings of the South Pacific Agriculture Survey 1979 which notes that 'men have taken on the prestigious role of producers of non-traditional cash crops for export, while women remain engaged in the production and marketing of local, and often lower valued, food crops'. Further, the survey felt that efforts to improve subsistence agriculture in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands should be directed at women and that preferably extension workers should be women.<sup>2</sup>

(iii) Lack of training in simple management techniques and accounting has in the past caused women to hesitate in taking that first step to plan a business. Fear of being made to look foolish is also a problem which often has to be overcome, almost to the degree of being aggressive to prove their ability.

(iv) Lack of sympathy by males for women's ambitions to set up in business, or an unwillingness to provide help and guidance, are often important constraints. Even when businesses are operating not all husbands or relatives are supportive and there are known cases of husbands helping themselves to the contents of the till for 'spending money'. How does one overcome this problem and attitude short of criminal prosecution?

(v) The range of business opportunities available to women for traditional or physical reasons is often narrower than that available to their male colleagues. Custom often precludes women from certain activities despite a desire to 'have a go' at non-traditional work.

(vi) Finally, there are the usual problems also faced by men in business establishment and development which are often more difficult for women to overcome because many people will not take them seriously, resent their attempts to enter certain activities, or are simply non-cooperative for purely selfish or male reasons. Often banks are reluctant to deal with women alone, insisting that husbands be co-borrowers.

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<sup>2</sup>R.G. Ward and A. Proctor (eds), *South Pacific Agriculture: Choices and Constraints*, Asian Development Bank and ANU Press, 1980:53-4.

If the points listed above can be accepted as representing a reasonable range of obstacles which have to be faced and overcome by women entering or hoping to enter the cash economy, what specific resources are available to them to counter these disincentives? The following are seen to represent some of the advantages which women have and which need to be developed in order to strengthen their potential as business persons:

- (i) Perhaps a woman's greatest strength is her natural resilience which flows from the often expressed philosophy that 'mother cannot be sick, we need her'.
- (ii) There is an ability in women to adjust and adapt to situations which is often lacking in men. For example, a Fijian woman taxi-driver who found that business during the evening hours was dangerous and that the whole industry was becoming overcompetitive, transformed her vehicle into a hearse and established an efficient and competitive funeral business.
- (iii) Natural dexterity and manipulative skills together with a traditional bias towards cooking often lead women into trades which give them a competitive edge over men, such as take-away food businesses.
- (iv) Those women who overcome the difficulties facing them often emerge stronger from such situations. They will then not be put down because of their sex and become able to stand up for their rights. This allows them to succeed and press a particular point of view where men might be disinclined to force the issue.
- (v) In some Pacific countries, and more particularly in the rural areas, women are more and more becoming family providers from household gardens, as well as wives and mothers, and this should lead to greater confidence in commercial dealings.
- (vi) A desire for order and the development of proper systems in business activities has led women to take a leading role in village trading activities which were once almost the sole prerogative of men.

What have been recorded above are not material resources, but characteristics of women as seen by a banker, and features which should prove valuable to the female borrower. The next issue to be looked at, therefore, is the extent of material assistance available to support women in their quest for income-earning activities.

Throughout the Pacific, DFIs are generally reasonably well endowed with financial resources and are able to make loans for worthwhile projects. But at times male bank officers may be disinclined to treat women's approaches for credit as seriously as could be desired. After all, until recently, male clients have dominated the borrowing field and it is a change in attitude through education which must be achieved. Some countries make specific reference in their development planning to equal opportunities for women, but it is not always easy to find positive evidence of the success of this policy.

Increasing the use of credit by women:  
what can be done?

1. Training of women in business techniques and accounting systems is an obvious area for support, but this is nothing new. In Papua New Guinea the Business Development Department and in Fiji the Business Opportunity and Management Advisory Service exist to help clients, both male and female. In other countries some support is available but not directed specifically at potential female DFI customers. To set up training courses is not easy and the net result is not always as successful as might be hoped for. Accordingly, the possibility might be explored of appointing to one of the major regional organizations, say the South Pacific Commission, a female credit adviser whose role it would be to travel among the islands talking to development banks about special problems of women customers, and advising womens' groups and organizations of what steps they need to take in order to satisfy the needs of financial institutions. Lack of awareness of resources available to assist potential entrepreneurs must be overcome, especially in the case of women interested in establishing a commercial enterprise.

2. While bank credit has not generally proved a constraint to women entering the cash economy, lack of personal equity in the form of either cash or assets has been a deterrent. Where clients are required to borrow almost 100 per cent of cash needs the debit equity gearing can place a heavy strain on cash flow and ultimately destroy the business. To reflect island governments' concerns for assisting women into business, an equity fund might be established whereby development banks were allowed to make a certain percentage of cash equity available to appropriate women-owned businesses. This money could be invested, not lent, to avoid interest but repaid after a business became successful. This form of assistance would lower interest payments by the client and be a real expression of government confidence in a woman's attempts to enter commercial activities.

3. This paper has been concerned with the operational aspects of DFIs but the role of trading banks must not be overlooked. Their resources are often far more substantial than those of the DFI and,

while their profit orientation is understood, they must be encouraged to recognize that a healthy economy can only benefit them and that women are a stabilizing influence and potent force for economic progress. A credit officer attached to the SPC could also motivate trading banks to increase lending to women. The extent of trading bank lending to women is not known but their traditionally cautious policies are unlikely to have led them to excel in this area of their operations. Commercial banks and larger trading houses could provide active support, advisory and supervisory, for women entering business for the first time.

4. In addition to the type of training envisaged in Section 1 above, i.e. in actual business operations, it is important that the educational systems of the island nations make provision for teaching girls skills which will encourage them to enter the commercial sector either on their own or through an established organization. At the tertiary level, the universities of the South Pacific, Papua New Guinea and the University of Technology, PNG, should be encouraged to offer appropriate training courses for entry to the private sector, as indeed should technical colleges. Training of women who show an aptitude for a successful business career should be encouraged through appropriate small business internships in Australia and New Zealand.

5. The development of business profiles by DFIs should be encouraged and small business undertakings suitable to women should be actively supported. There are many types of business which women can manage, even with family commitments, for example take-away food, laundry, handicrafts, clothing manufacture. If necessary, a DFI could establish a corporate entity with the intended owner having a minority equity which could gradually be increased out of earnings, as was planned for the umbrella business referred to earlier.

### Conclusion

Historically, women in the Pacific have not been heavily engaged in business activities involving credit. Times are changing, the money economy is more and more replacing the traditional subsistence economy and enterprise of a 'Western' type is superseding many customary activities. The role of women in business has always been important but often secondary to men. Now is the time for women to take advantage of the resources of the region to develop business activities and, where these are seen not to be adequate or biased to men, to urge a shift in the balance. Resources — cash, credit, training and advice — are available. It remains for them to be utilized.

Appendix A  
Loans to women customers, Development Bank of Western Samoa  
(currency – Western Samoan tala)

Category of loan	1980		1981		1982		1983	
	Number	Amount	Number	Amount	Number	Amount	Number	Amount
Bananas	41	14,050	13	7,210	14	12,840	26	12,850
Livestock	21	5,360	6	2,200	4	11,420	25	13,640
Taro	127	79,870	86	79,130	98	114,600	190	205,270
Poultry	6	2,350	4	1,500	2	1,470	5	2,550
Vegetables	5	1,370	2	3,000	2	500	7	6,780
Passionfruit	1	470	2	20,590	15	56,990	41	150,455
Cocoa	3	3,450	1	200	2	1,040	4	7,880
Coconuts	-	-	1	400	3	1,620	2	1,000
Fishing	1	250	2	1,500	2	2,300	1	2,000
Others <sup>a</sup>	11	13,140	14	30,300	15	103,285	26	70,950
Apparel	2	500	2	11,500	2	600	3	2,700
Education services	2	3,600	1	2,000	2	8,000	1	21,800
Food manufacturing	5	8,700	3	5,400	4	18,700	4	9,100
Food processing	16	8,870	4	2,850	1	350	8	95,300
Hotels	-	-	2	5,800	1	2,300	2	14,000
Restaurants	-	-	1	500	2	6,200	1	2,000
Retail	5	5,070	-	-	3	3,390	2	3,070
Land transport	-	-	-	-	1	24,100	1	33,500
Domestic services	-	-	1	1,900	2	4,580	2	2,000

<sup>a</sup>Others – includes plantation vehicles and plantation housing.

Total lending:

Category	Number	Amount	Number	Amount	Number	Amount	Number	Amount
Agriculture	3760	2159	2410	2238	1362	1696		n.a.
Group	16	28	15	18	20	50		n.a.
Rural development	77	157	39	65	18	37		n.a.
Infrastructure	29	362	20	295	15	249		n.a.
Industrial	148	833	102	697	95	1414		n.a.
	4030	3539	2586	3313	1510	3446		

Source: Development Bank of Western Samoa.

Appendix B

Loans to women customers, Development Bank of Solomon Islands  
(currency – Solomon Islands \$)

Category of loan	1980		1981		1982		1983	
	Number	Amount	Number	Amount	Number	Amount	Number	Amount
Agriculture – Cocoa/coconut	2	1,800	2	5,800	7	7,690	4	7,900
Livestock – Cattle/piggery/ poultry	1	100	-	-	2	565	3	5,950
Fishing/rural transport	3	1,059	4	1,780	3	1,046	5	2,233
Rural housing	13	10,418	9	8,185	-	-	-	-
Commerce – Retail	6	12,900	1	3,100	2	10,600	2	46,500
Professional	1	6,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
Manufacturing – Food	4	1,945	3	1,868	1	380	2	790
Clothing	-	-	1	500	3	3,300	-	-
<b>Total lending:</b>								
Category	Number	Amount	Number	Amount	Number	Amount	Number	Amount
Agriculture	1236	1345	661	837	n.a.	1582	n.a.	n.a.
Industry	132	517	111	758	n.a.	718	n.a.	n.a.
Commerce	121	520	71	170	n.a.	625	n.a.	n.a.
Services	477	2022	310	465	n.a.	436	n.a.	n.a.
	1966	4404	1153	2230		3361		

Source: Development Bank of Solomon Islands.





# **WOMEN IN POLITICS**





# 12

## Vanuatu women's development since independence

Grace Molisa

It does not do to dwell on Vanuatu's unique history. It is sufficient to affirm that women and men were united in the bid for independence, and women along with men have had equal right to exercise the power of their vote to determine Vanuatu's government system.

In looking ahead beyond the attainment of political independence in 1980 it was recognized that sex-specific encouragement and training was necessary in the total national development spectrum, continuum or global horizon. An attempt was made to bring this about from the beginning by involving women at the highest level of politics. Difficulties existed because of lack of preparation, lack of information and misinformation. Despite the difficulties a woman did contest the national elections preparatory to independence and a woman contested the last national elections, the first one since independence. She lost by only five votes.

In the government's decentralization process, women are involved in local government by nomination as provided for by the Decentralization Act, and an attempt has been made even at this stage for women to step beyond that provision to contest the open local government constituency election. That attempt has been successful, with one woman in one of the local governments being elected on an equal footing with men. Vanuatu's two municipalities both have female representation carrying heavy responsibilities, but unfortunately they receive very little or no assistance at all from those who elected them to their respective offices. The lady councillor on the Vila Municipal Council is Chairperson of the municipality's Town Planning Committee. The lady councillor on the Luganville Municipal Council is the Deputy Mayor of that municipality.

In the organization of women for the resolution of women's needs and concerns there have been church women's organizations working among their female congregations, the Women's Affairs Office specializing in home economics and income generation, a

women's wing of the Vanuaaku Pati at the political level and various other social organizations operating in Vanuatu. The most recent women's organization, the National Council of Women, came into being in 1980 to provide an umbrella organization for women's groups, so that women might be better prepared at the national level to cope with the developmental processes that independence would generate. The short life of the NCW so far has not been without difficulties.

It is worth bearing in mind that in the colonial era church women's groups were largely concerned with the propagation of the Gospel and wellbeing of the soul, while the Women's Interest Office of the government provided for the satisfaction of man's stomach and the quality craftsmanship which went into decorating his attire.

It is noteworthy that in the colonial condominium era there were no female role models in the three administrations which operated at that time. On a 10-tier public service promotions ladder inherited by the independent administration, Ni-Vanuatu women could be seen rising to the maximum height of Category 4. Women were cleaners, clerks, typists, teachers, nurses. Category 5 upwards was reserved for men. During the transition period the system was relaxed, so that women could be promoted to Category 5 if they were superb typists, bilingual in English and French and had administrative experience. However, it was obvious that expatriate women were more able to move up to that level than Ni-Vanuatu women.

The party in power went into government with the support of women and has kept an open door for women and will continue to encourage and strive for the development of women in its effort to develop the Ni-Vanuatu. The present government went into office with a woman among its political advisers and there are currently two in its second term of office. About fifty women have risen through the Public Service ranks to Category 5, about a dozen to Category 6, a handful to Category 7, and women have reached the pay scale of Category 9.

At independence there was one woman graduate and a few women with diplomas. We looked forward to facilitating the access of women into agriculture, law, business and medical studies. We now have a handful of graduates. Tagabe Agriculture School has been opened up to women, and there are women students training in the fields of agriculture, medicine, law and business.

I would like now to make some personal observations:

1. Vanuatu is a very young Pacific nation with many problems. It has much to learn, and cannot expect to contribute a great deal at conference level.

2. If it is true that overseas bodies wish to assist in the development of women in Vanuatu then they must learn to listen a great deal more than they have ever pretended to do before — that is, listen to women, not necessarily the men speaking for women.
3. Women's projects need funds without strings.
4. Women's projects need funds first, and personnel only if absolutely necessary, at the absolute discretion of the project implementors.
5. Proper channels of communication must be adhered to. In one country, one nation, there is only one government. The fact that national structures may be weak or that processes lack clarity is no excuse for over-enthusiastic outsiders to bypass normal procedures or channels to make direct contact with individuals at the local level to justify their operation in the country. Because of our present inadequacies our people are not sufficiently informed to resist the lure of immediate, short-term, flash-in-the-pan type prosperity.
6. As much as possible the local people must be left alone to decide on and carry out their development in their own way, at their own pace.



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