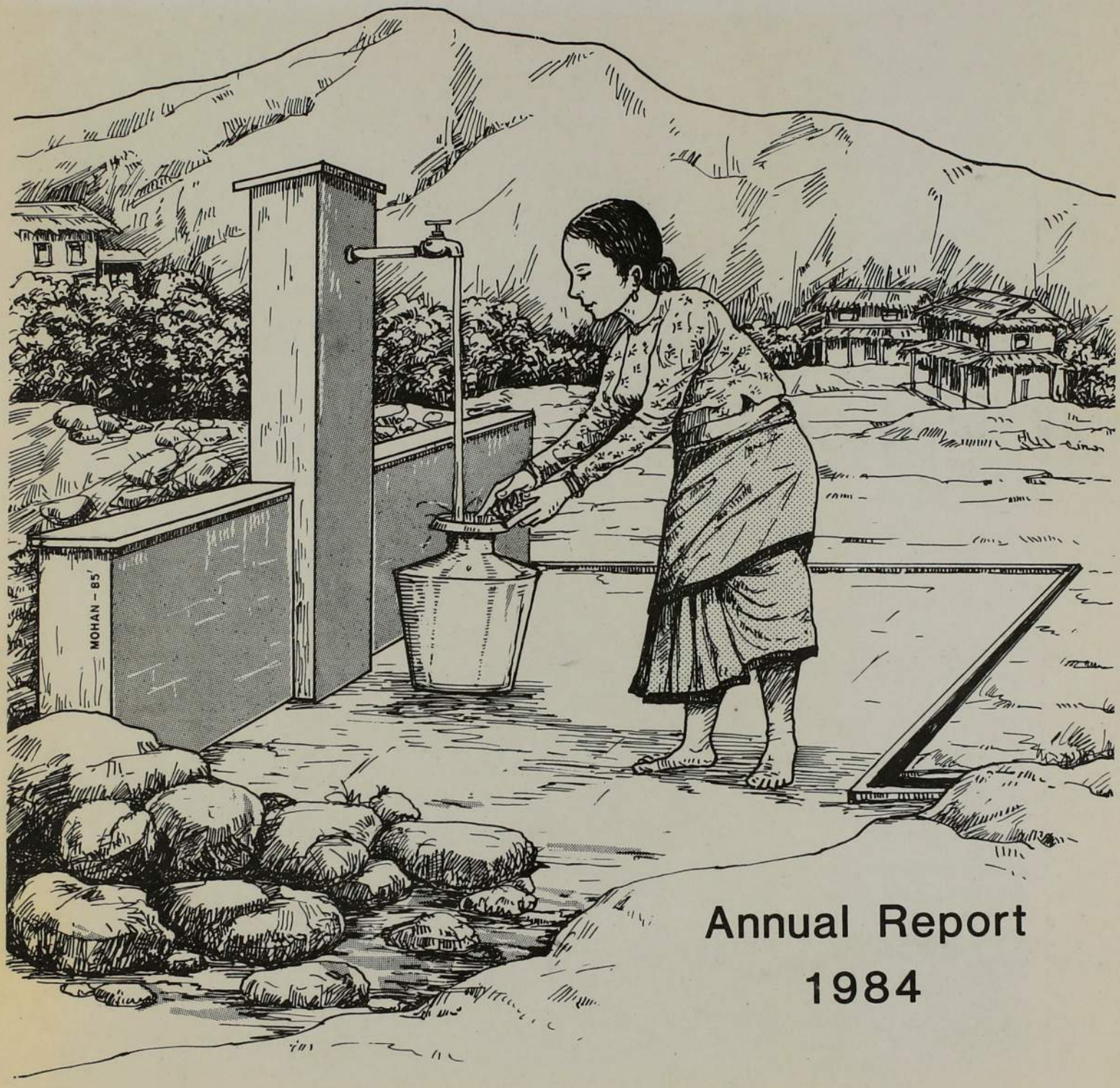
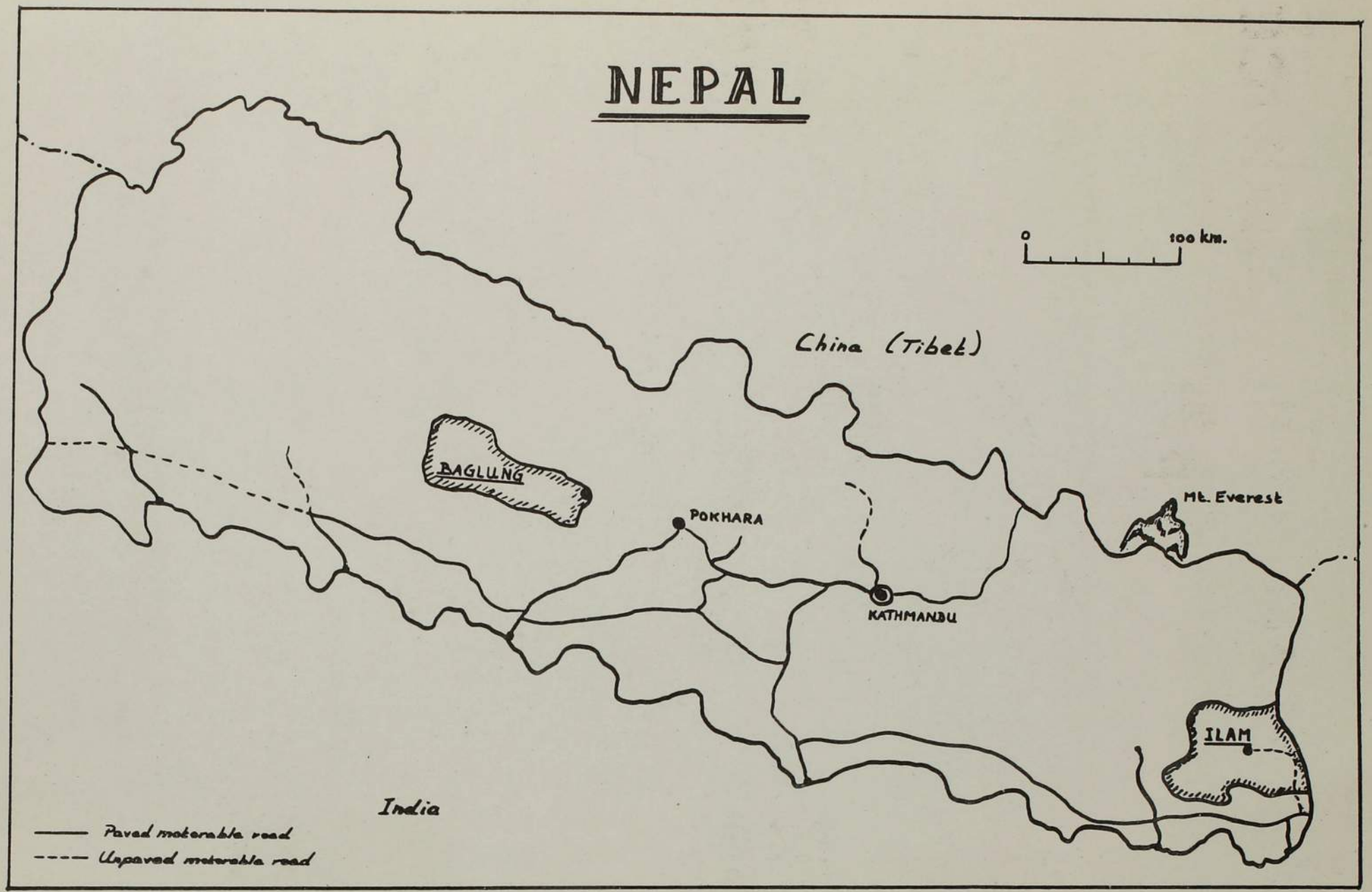
LUTHERAN WORLD SERVICE
NEPAL



Annual Report
1984


NEPAL
0
100 km.
China (Tibet)
BAGLUNG
POKHARA
KATHMANDU
Mt. Everest
ILAM
India
Paved motorable road
Unpaved motorable road

INTRODUCTION

Negotiations with the government of Nepal on the establishment of a service programme in this country started in 1983. A General Agreement between the Social Services National Coordination Council and the Lutheran World Service was signed on the 4th of June, 1984.

On the basis of this Agreement, the LWS can now carry out activities in the field of relief, rehabillitation and development work, in collaboration with the Council, it's specialized Committees and local Voluntary Agencies.

Depicted in tourist brochures as a secluded fairytale country at the foot of the towering Himalayas, where numerous gods are worshipped at the ever so numerous temples, pagodas and stupas, Nepal presents quite a different picture when it is analyzed in terms of development indicators such as per capita income, life expectancy, infant mortality and literacy. While at present the population is barely able to feed itself, the food situation is further deteriorating both qualitatively and quantitatively. The country is drawn inexorably into a vicious circle in which an increasing population in their quest for food and firewood is prematurely exhausting the natural environment. With the dramatic examples of a number of African countries in mind, there is a reason for real concern.

Our Christian responsibility to share and be partners with the under-privileged is challenged in this situation where we are asked to join efforts with the Nepali people in caring for their future. Our thanks go to all those who have assisted us in starting our work here ..... our Donors, the Social Services National Coordination Council, the local partner Agencies and our headquarters in Geneva.

January, 1985

Gerrit den Velde.

THE SETTING

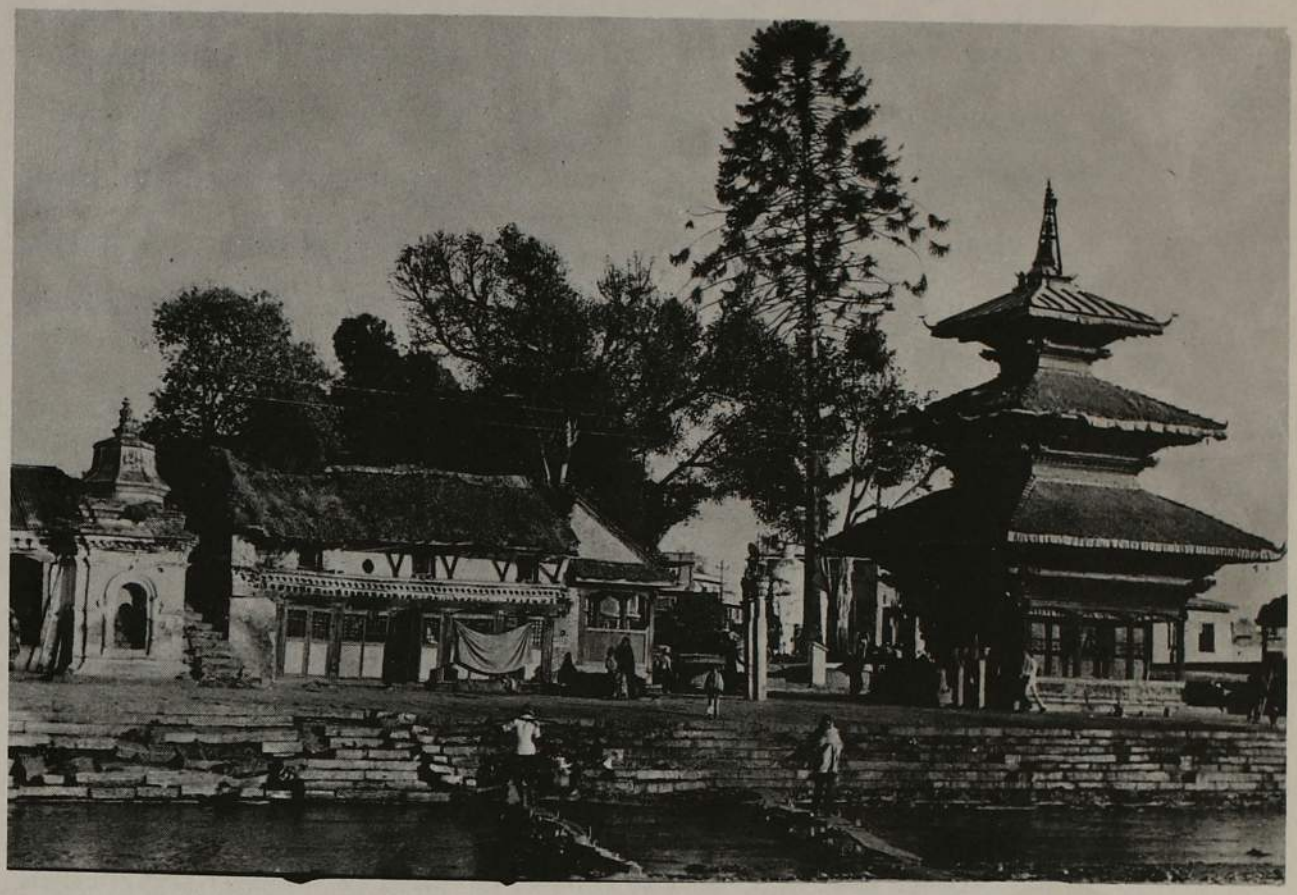


photo Jurgen Schick

Physical

Nepal comprises the southern slopes of the Himalayas and is landlocked between the Gangetic plain of India to the South and the High Himalayas of Tibet in the People's Republic of China to the North. The shape of the country is roughly rectangular and covers an area about 3.5 times the size of Switzerland. The country's most striking features are the extreme variations in altitude, going from the lowlying Terai to the towering Himalayas, culminating in the world's

highest peak Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) at 8,848 meters. Climatic zones vary along with the altitudes, providing for an extremely rich and diversified flora and fauna over relatively short distances. Rainfall varies from 4,000 mm. annually in eastern Nepal to less than 1,000 mm. in the far west of the country. Around 80% of all precipitation falls in the monsoon period, between June and September.

Brief History

In the course of the mid-nineteenth century, the Rana autocracy emerged, securing powerful hereditary positions in the government for their numerous relatives. The ruling monarchy at that time was reduced to a mere figurehead. During the period of Rana supremacy, which lasted until 1950, Nepal became a British ally whilst retaining its independance and sovereignty. The Rana administration fulfilled two main functions, the collection of revenue and the maintenance of law and order. It is estimated that 25% to 50% of all revenues were appropriated for the person of the Prime Minister. With the exception of one or two development-minded Prime Ministers, the Rana Prime Ministers were mostly involved in building huge palaces and leading extravagant lives. Today, these palaces have become one of Kathmandu's major tourist attractions. Whereas the central governmental authority rested with the Prime Minister, administra-

tors at the district level enjoyed relatively great freedom of action, as long as acceptable levels of revenue were maintained. Any form of higher learning activity was discouraged, and people were kept in the dark about the outside world. The motivation for such unconstructive policy arose from the authorities' fear of an eventual uprising of the "enlightened" masses.

After Indian independence in 1947, various political factions arose in Nepal, conducting non-violent agitation for constituional reforms. In 1951 the King returned to the throne and an interim cabinet was formed with some Ranas still in important positions, but loosing their complete hold on Nepal for good.

Administration

In present days, the country is ruled under the Panchayat system. The term "Panchayat" is derived from a socio-political system that has existed from time immemorial in the Indian subcontinent. According to the present constitution, all executive, legislative and judicial powers emenate from the crown. With the King at the system's apex, there are three layers of government: the Village/Town Panchayat, the District Panchayat and the National Panchayat. Elections for the various panchayat levels take place every five years; the next elections scheduled to take place in 1986. A fairly

recent important political decision to deminish centralization of authority and to thereby increase the participation and involvement of local people in local development, has been the passing of the Decentralization Act by His Majesty's Government. The District Panchayat now emerges as the single most important unit in terms of the planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation of development projects at the district level.

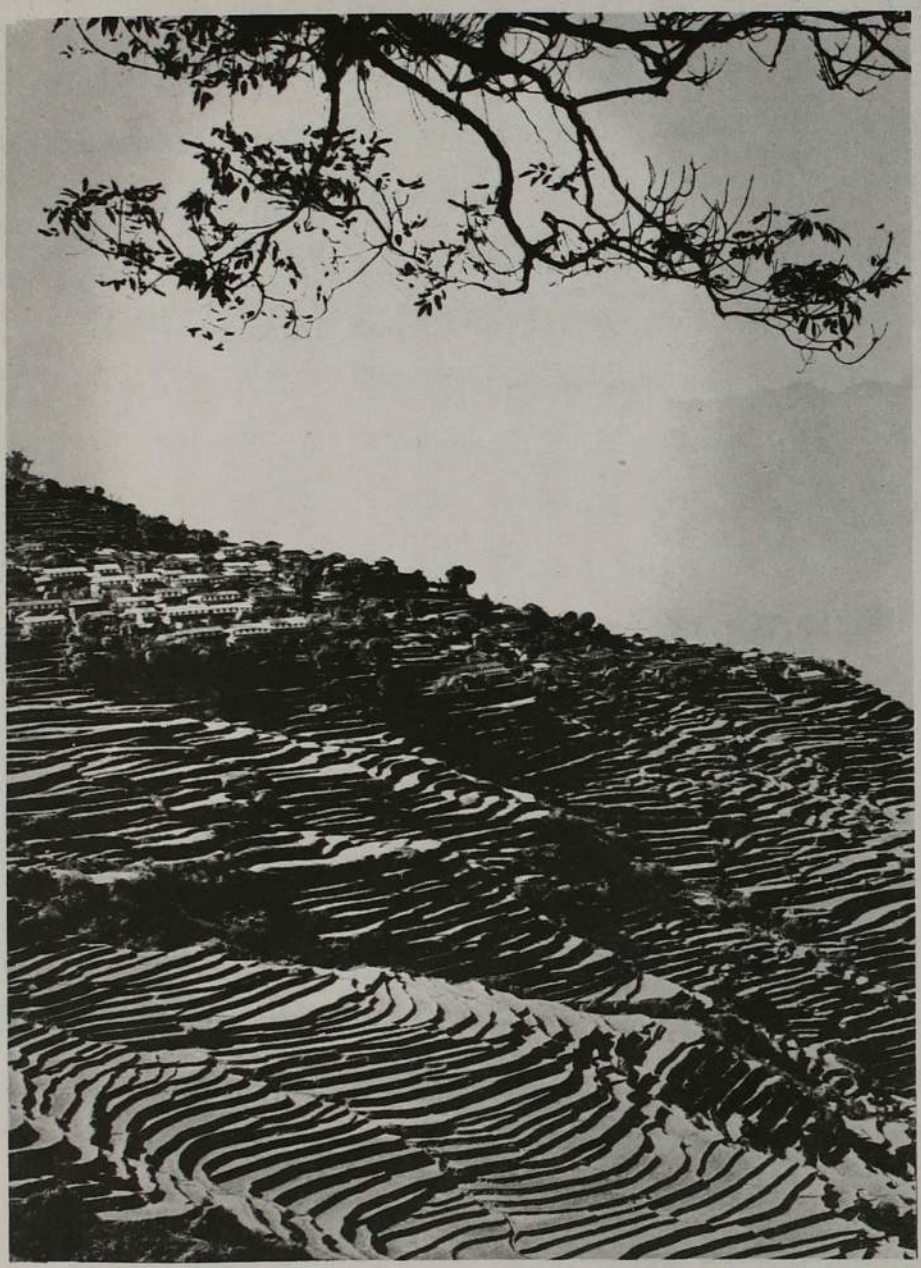


photo Jurgen Schick

Socio-Economic Features

Using the Gross Domestic Product(GDP) per Capita as a measure of poverty, it is clear that Nepal, with a per capita GDP of US$ 140 in 1982, belongs to the category of the poorest countries. Even within this category, which consists of 33 countries with an annual GDP lower than US$ 420 per capita, Nepal is one of the poorest. The use of per capita GDP figures to indicate welfare or level of development has been a topic of great controversy. An alternative indicator for measuring welfare or level of development is the Physical Quality of Life Index,which is a composite of the three sub-indicators infant mortality, life expectancy at age one and basic literacy. Infant mortality and life expectancy at age one sum up the combined effects of social relations, nutritional status, public health and family environment. The literacy indicator provides information about the potential for development and the extent to which poor groups can share in the opportunities and advantages of a country's development. Comparing Nepal with other countries on the basis of PQLI figures, it is 20th. least developed in a list of 150 countries.

The ecological sector, comprising foresty, crop production and animal husbandry, causes the greatest concern for Nepal's development planners;

- Over the last decade, forest resources have reduced by 25%.
- No less than 95% of the rural energy needs and 20-25% of livestock fodder is extracted from forests.
- While over the past 15 years 20,000 ha of forest was planted, a total of 2 million ha disappeared over the same period.

photo Jurgen Schick

Directly linked with population growth (2.6% per annum), rampant deforestation due to the collection of firewood and the opening of new croplands, is adversely affecting

soil quality, destroying the habitat of numerous species, destabilizing the alpine watersupply systems and exposing newly denuded soils to erosion. Landslides and floods are increasingly recurrent and often connected with human tragedy. With over 90% of the population making a living based within the ecological sector and with very limited opportunities for alternative employment, the further disruption of the ecological balance constitutes the most crucial obstacle in adressing Nepal's development problems effectively.

Its landlocked geographical position is another obstacle, binding Nepal hand and foot to the willingness of its southern neighbour India. The Indian government can influence the kind, quantity and price of traded commodities, and facilitate or not the passing of goods in transit. Indian aid to Nepal focuses mainly on the development of infrastructure, especially water resources for irrigation and electricity generation, beneficial to India. The open border with India creates an uncontrollable influx of people from the more densely populated bordering states of India.

photo Jurgen Schick

Due to its rural, non-industrialized character, Nepal is increasingly dependent on foreign aid for its development. At present, more than 60% of the development budget consists of foreign aid money. National sources of foreign exchange are limited and consist of earnings from carpet exports, tourism and remittances to Nepali Gurkha soldiers in the service of the British and Indian armies.

WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

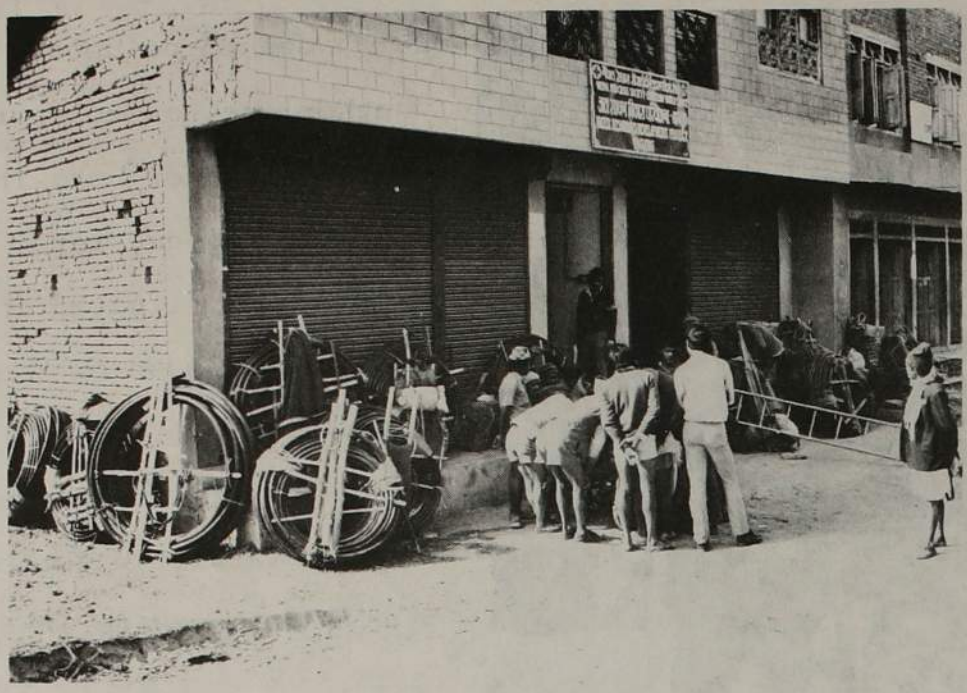
LWS' choice for the implementation of a Water Resources Development Project in Baglung District, is mainly based on indications and advice from His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMG) and more particularly the Ministry of Panchayat and Local Development. Compared with other Districts, Baglung is a neglected area in terms of outside support for its development activities.

Baglung District is located in the middle hills, some 250 km west of Kathmandu. The altitude ranges from 800 m to above 7,000 m, in which the climate also changes from sub-tropical to an alpine climate in the high mountainous areas. Some 97% of the 215,000 inhabitants make their living from agriculture, forestry and fishing. According to information available 13,000 ha are under cultivation of which no more than 260 ha (2%), have assured irrigation facilities. At present, a total of eight drinking water schemes have been constructed successfully with regional and national assistance, providing about 25,000 people with safe drinking water. This is still only 11.5% of the total population.The majority of the people is still depending on rivers, streams, open wells and dirty ponds for their drinking water. Since latrines are unknown in most places, surface water is often heavily contaminated, as streams and riversides are the preferred spots for defecation.Waterborne diseases are therefore amongst the biggest health hazard in Nepal.

Due to its remote location, communications with and within the District are a little complicated. Small planes provide regular airservice to an airstrip approximately 4 hours walking distance from Baglung. Planes however can only operate during the dry season. From Baglung to the nearest road-head is 2 to 4 days

walk, depending upon whether one has to carry a heavy load or not. The District Headquarters, Baglung, is situated in the extreme east of the District. In order to reach the western parts of the District, another 5 days walking are involved.

Following the signing of the agreement in June 1984, implementation of the Water Resources Development Project started immediately. In collaboration with the LWS' local counterpart agency, the Nepal Red Cross Society, clerical and technical staff were recruited. By the end of the year, the project employed 18 staff. Among them is a Community Development Coordinator, Administrative and Accounts staff, Civil Overseers , Technicians and General Support staff. The team is headed up by an expatriate Civil Engineer,who was also responsible for the detailed survey and design work.



On the basis of the quantity estimates, construction materials such as polyethylene pipe, steel pipe, building steel and cement were ordered and delivered at the road-head. From here the goods were carried to the project's warehouse in Baglung. A porter's load is somewhere between 60 and 80 kg. To transport the 65 tons of construction materials to Baglung, some 3500 porter mandays were involved. Porterage charges constitute an important cost factor. While the price of a bag of cement is US $ 6.50 at the border, it will cost around US $ 15.00 by the time it reaches Baglung.

The project has a two pronged approach in the field of Water Resources Development. Firstly a Community Water Supply and Sanitation programme and secondly, Minor

Hill Irrigation Schemes. Community Water Supply and Sanitation consists of the construction of drinking water supply systems, based on the gravity-flow principle. Clean water from a non-contaminated source is piped down to a collection tank, from where distribution lines deliver the water to a number of public tapstands in the village.

Connected with the drinking water scheme is a sanitation programme, assisting people in building simple pit latrines and creating awareness about environmental sanitation. Source protection and conservation through tree plantations are also to be emphasized. Minor Hill Irrigation mainly involves the rehabilitation and improvement of old canals that have been damaged due to landslides or floods and the extension of irrigation facilities to new areas.

Official inauguration of the project by the Zonal Commissioner of Dhaulagiri took place on the birthday of His Majesty the King, the 28th. December. In discussions with the Social Services National Coordination Council, the LWS has been oriented towards continued activities in Baglung District. In order to assess the needs and the potentials in the District, the LWS intends to undertake a baseline survey on which further programming can be based.

The Water Resources Development Project is presently involved in the implementation of three Community Water Supply and Sanitation projects and one Hill Irrigation Scheme. Following is a summary of each project and its stage of implementation;

Majhkharka

Majhkharka is located 30 km west of Baglung, approximately 6 to 8 hour walk, with an altitude of 2,100 m (Baglung Bazar is at around 950 m altitude). The proposal consists of the implementation of four seperate supply lines, of which the main supply line will be implemented during 1984-85 and the three remaining lines during the following implementation season in 1985-86.

Around 800 people will benefit from the main supply line. The group is composed of different castes, with a majority of Magars. The total length of pipe to be laid during this first phase is around 4,500 m. The village contribution in the form of voluntary labour for cutting stones and gravel, digging trenches, collecting local construction materials and part of the transportation costs for the pipes and cement, accounts for around 30% of the total construction costs.

Collection of sand, the cutting of stone and gravel is 60% completed. Sand for the construction work is to come from the riverbed, some 1,300 m below the village. The digging of the trenches and the excavations for the reservoir tank have just started.

Titaure

This village is located about 15 km from Baglung Bazar at an altitude of 1,850 m, involving some 3 to 5 hours walking uphill. The 1,000 people of this community to benefit from the scheme, consist in majority of high caste Chhetris. Strong leadership in the Community and

highly motivated villagers account for enthusiastic and speedy implementation of the project so far.

Practically all trenches (3 feet deep) for the 3,500 m of pipe have been dug and 1,200 m of pipe has been laid. Cutting of gravel and collection of sand and stone is 80% completed. Excavation for the reservoir tank is completed and the transportation of pipes and cement to the site has started.

In this place, as well as in the other villages, community participation is an important contributing factor towards the realization of the scheme. The organization of the labour gangs and the upkeep of the attendance register is entirely the community's responsibility. It is estimated that each able member of the community will supply one month of free labour for the project.

Mulpani

This project consists of two separate schemes in wards no 6 and 9 of Mulpani village, requiring a total length of pipe of 3,000 m. Ward no 6 is located at about 2 km from Baglung Bazar and ward no 9 at about 5 km from Baglung at an altitude of some 1,650 m. The majority

of the 950 people to benefit from the scheme, are made up of low caste Kami, Damai and Sarkis. Progress in Mulpani has been a bit slow. With Baglung Bazar nearby, it is relatively easy to obtain some work at full wages, which acts as a disincentive towards voluntary labour for the project. The composition of this community with a privileged high caste minority of Brahmins on one hand and the dominated majority of low caste groups on the other, makes it complicated developing a system of equal contribution by the village members.

Collection of sand and stones and the cutting of gravel is 50% completed. Digging of the trenches and excavation for the reservoir tank have just started.

Kudule

This proposed irrigation scheme has not yet started. Certain social problems, not sufficiently recognized during the survey, are cropping up now that implementation is about to start. The major problem being the right to use the water from a small stream, which also provides water to a neighbouring village, located in the adjacent District. With the help of district officials the project will need to settle the problem of water rights, before any construction work can be

undertaken. It is estimated that two seasons will be required to complete this irrigation scheme.

Kudule is at about 3 km from Baglung Bazar at an altitude of 1,000 m. High caste Brahmins and Chhetris make up the majority of the 240 small holder families in this project.

The community has strong leadership and is well motivated to increase their irrigation capacity. The project will cover a command area of 125 ha, of which 100 ha consists of the rehabilitation of the existing irrigation system and 25 ha new land to be brought under irrigation. As the implementation of the scheme requires a lot of digging work for canals, the village participation through voluntary labour is estimated to account for around 41% of the total construction costs.

SERICULTURE PROJECT

Sericulture, the production of silk, is a rather new activity in Nepal.There seems to be no traditional sericulture in this country, unlike in neighbouring India and China. In collaboration with South Korea, the agricultural department established a sericulture center in a place 30 km from Kathmandu, some 10 years ago. This center is to promote sericulture in the country and guarantees the marketing of cocoons.

While negotiating with the government about the establishment of a programme in Nepal, there was keen interest in utilizing the LWS sericulture experience gained in India and Bangladesh. With the assistance of a sericulture advisor from the LWS India programme, a proposal for the implementation of a sericulture project in Ilam was drawn up.

The aim of the project in Ilam is to involve rural women in sericulture to generate income. Ilam District is part of the Mechi Zone in Nepal's Eastern Development Region and borders to the east with the State of of West Bengal in India. The District covers an area of 1,570 sq km and its altitude ranges from 600 to peaks of nearly 4,000 m. The District is divided in 41 village Panchayats and has

an estimated population (1980) of 161,800. The vast majority of the people are engaged in agriculture. The District headquarters, Ilam Bazar can be reached by motorable road from the southern Terai area. From Kathmandu the distance to Ilam is around 700 km; a 15 hour car drive.

The sericulture project will operate from a demonstration/training center. Following the signing of the general agreement in June, selection of an appropriate site for the center and negotiations with the District government started. The District acted rather quickly and provided the project with a 3.5 acre plot along the road, 8 km. before reaching Ilam. The plot has irrigation facilities and is excellent for this purpose. The District paid the equivalent of US$ 2,000 out of their development budget to buy this land, thereby clearly registering their support for this project.

For the implementation of the project, the LWS is collaborating with the Women's Development Association in Ilam. It is envisaged that a gradual transfer of responsibilities to this Association will take place, enabling the women to run this center independantly in the future. On the national level, the LWS shares the operational responsibilities with the Women's Service Coordination Committee, one of the specialized committees working under the Social Services National

Coordination Council. The partners have formed a Steering Committee that sets policy guidelines for the implementation of this project.

The Women's Service Coordination Committee arranged for the temporary secondment of an experienced Construction Engineer from the National Construction Company, to the project.

The Engineer made a detailed survey of the plot and developed plans and estimates for construction work.By the end of the year, tendering with sub-contractors for the construction of office, staffhouses, hostel and rearing house, was in full swing.

It took some time before the right staff for the position of Project Manager and Sericulture Technician had been found. Lower technical and administrative staff are still to be recruited. These vacancies will be filled through local advertisement in the project area.

The project has built up good relations with the government sericulture center outside Kathmandu. By early 1985, the project will receive 4,000 mulberry saplings from this center to be planted in Ilam. The center will also provide training for the sericulture extension workers of the project.

LWS SUPERVISORY STAFF

Mr. Gerrit A. ten Velde	Resident Representative
Mr. Bert A.M. van Ommen	Project Manager Water Resources
Mr. Bishnu D. Angbuhang	Project Manager Seri Culture

TOTAL PROGRAMME RESOURCES ADMINISTERED IN 1984

Water Resources Development Project	US $	90,942
Sericulture Project		2,295
Programme Operations		90,559
	US $	183,796

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