



REGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR POLLUTION CONTROL IN THE
TANNING INDUSTRY IN SOUTH EAST ASIA - US/RAS/92/120

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STATUS OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE TANNING INDUSTRY IN NEPAL

COUNTRY SURVEY

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ABBREVIATIONS/ACCRONYMS USED

FNCCI	FEDERATION OF NEPALESE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LICC	LEATHER INDUSTRY CO-ORDINATION CELL
NGO	NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION
NLITA	NEPALESE LEATHER INDUSTRY AND TRADERS' ASSOCIATION
NBSM	NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS AND METROLOGY
REPO	REGIONAL PROGRAMME OFFICE
UNIDO	UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION
UNIFEM	UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR WOMEN DEVELOPMENT
WEAN	WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS' ASSOCIATION OF NEPAL

SUMMARY

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN TANNING/LEATHER INDUSTRY

Women form a considerable part of the workforce in Nepal. Out of total 9,279,123 working women in Nepal (as per census 1994) around 89% are working in house holds and agriculture, 2.1% in the industrial sector and 3.7% in the service industry.

In Nepal, women account only for 8% of the total work force in tanneries (total number of workers in tanning industry is about 519). Only two tanneries - out of the 15 registered ones - employ women at all. These women are deployed either as helpers to male machine operators or as unskilled workers in the leather finishing sections. In both cases, women are generally employed on daily wage basis. Equal pay for equal work between men and women does not appear to prevail.

More women are employed in industrial units converting leather into products, particularly foot wear.

The leather goods and crafts industry of Nepal currently provides wage and self-employment to a few women. Cottage, small and large crafts centers, willing to employ more women, however, face problems such as non-availability of skills and of raw material.

With regard to women's employment in (environmental) testing, laboratory and R&D sector, with specific reference to tanning industry, only one woman is currently employed in a government research institute. Her responsibility is limited to heading the small leather unit in this institute.

In the tanning industry related service sector, providing training and consulting, the Leather Industry Co-ordination Cell (LICC), under the Ministry of Industry is the only such institution in the country. Women constitute 60% of the training staff of LICC.

FACTORS AFFECTING EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN

The general attitude of tanners/employers towards women's employment is cautious, claiming lack of experience and of skills, of women, as the main reasons for their low enthusiasm in this matter. Some employers felt that such work was too strenuous for women. Aside from this, they feel that the presence of women will create disharmony within the workforce of the tannery.

Women are reluctant to take up employment in the tannery sector, citing unattractive working conditions (poor cleanliness and safety) as main reasons.

Prevailing social and religious notions in the communities with regard to tanning and leather industry are not positive. These are considered unfit for those from higher strata of caste system. Pressure from within family and village communities, makes it difficult for women, belonging to Indo-Aryan communities, to choose employment in these sectors.

Distinctive attitudes are prevalent within the various regions of Nepal (Terai, Inner Terai, mountainous region) towards women's work outside the house. Social and economic mobility of women outside their village community is limited in many areas and often subject to prior permission by the village head.

Fear and some instances of sexual harassment of women workers at the work place have made women shy away from taking up employment in any industry, particularly in the Terai region.

EFFORTS AT EMPLOYING WOMEN IN THE TANNING AND LEATHER INDUSTRY

To date, no specific efforts have been made by industrial associations (FNCCI, NLITA) or governmental and non-governmental organisations (NGO) to promote women's participation in the tanning industry.

Limited activities in promoting women's employment in the leather goods and craft sector, particularly through NGOs and LCCI, have been undertaken.

In Birat Shoes Industry, manufacturing leather shoes for the local and export market (mainly Japan), about 70% of workers in different production stages, are women. The industrial group, which has recently taken over the only government owned tannery in Nepal, is planning to encourage employment of women in all production stages in the tannery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To encourage increased women's participation in the tanning industry, efforts from all sectors are needed. At the tannery level, tanners will have to be encouraged to primarily improve the general working conditions.

2. A positive attitude of the tanners towards women's employment has to be developed, convincing them of the advantages of employing women and proving existing perceptions wrong. This can be achieved by selecting two to three volunteer tanners (e.g. Birat Leathers, Hetauda), who have had some success with employing women in their tannery or shoe factory, to act as "advocates" in promoting women's employment.
3. Negative social and cultural perceptions with regard to women's employment in general and in the tanning industry, in particular, should be resolved through active involvement of local social associations and selected NGOs. This however is a major social issue, not only confined to employment in the tanning industry.
4. Existing institutions and initiatives in the field of skills up-gradation and training, should be strengthened, so as to provide the industry with qualified and skilled workers, of both genders.
5. In line with the government's goal of encouraging the tanners in Nepal to extend their production beyond the semi-finished stage, tanners, who are already equipped with finishing machinery, may be specifically assisted in establishing finishing production, while, at the same, encouraging them to employ women in the finishing processes. For this purpose, reference to positive experience of tanners in Tamil Nadu, India and elsewhere in the region may be made.

SCOPE OF STUDY

Eight countries of the South-East Asia region account for about 30% of the total leather production of the world. The income generated by this sector is important for these national economies. In some countries, including Nepal, the leather sector is among the top foreign exchange earners. In Nepal, the tanning and leather industry provides employment to, particularly, weaker sections of the society, such as scheduled castes and tribes.

At the same time, the tanning industry in these countries has the image of a highly polluting industry, exposing both workers and environment to avoidable risks. The United Nations Industrial Development Organisation - UNIDO - has launched a Regional Programme for Pollution Control in the Tanning Industry in South-East Asia to particularly address the issues of

tanneries' pollution and occupational safety and health of workers. To do so, UNIDO is carrying out various project activities under the umbrella project US/RAS/92/120 and the national project US/NEP/92/120 in Nepal.

Under the objective 3 of former, the regional programme aims at increasing women's contribution and their integration in the activities of the tanning industry. This study has been undertaken to assess the current status of women's participation in the tanning industry in Nepal, to eventually arrive at a strategy for actually increasing their participation in this sector. To date, no such systematic assessment had been carried out in Nepal.

METHODOLOGY

UNIDO engaged a national expert to carry out the assessment as per the job description. The expert was expected to collect statistical data with regard to women's employment from primary and secondary sources. At the same time, the expert was expected to compile qualitative information regarding perceptions of both employers and women with regard to employment in the tanning industry.

The information, including data on social, religious, cultural and economic issues was collected through open-ended interviews with tanners, women workers in tanneries and leather good factories, representatives of government agencies, non-governmental organisations, leather testing division, Leather Industry Co-ordination Cell (LICC) and women entrepreneurs association. In addition to these, the expert discussed with key persons from academic institutions and foreign bi- and multi-lateral organisations. During the collection of information in the field, the expert visited 12 of the 15 registered tanneries in Nepal.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The data collection in the field was impeded and delayed by a temporary stop of operation of the tanneries due to the ban of export of "wet-blue" leather imposed by the Government of Nepal.

In addition to this, quantitative analysis could not be completed due to non-availability of structured secondary data on women's employment in Nepal. All data with regard to women's employment in the tanning and leather industry is primary data.

TANNING INDUSTRY IN NEPAL

COUNTRY FRAMEWORK

According to the 1991 census the total population of Nepal was 18.5 million, women accounting for around 9.23 million. As per the census 89% of the women are engaged in household and agricultural work. Only 193,000 women (2.1% of total population) are working in the manufacturing sector, with another 341,500 (3.7%) engaged in the service sector. According to information from FNCCI, currently 22,464 women are registered as proprietors of various small manufacturing establishments, while 6,717 are employed in operative, administrative and technical positions.

Basically, the Nepalese population is divided into two cultural groups - the Tibeto-Burmese and the Indo-Aryan. The Tibeto-Burmese group belongs to the upper mountain or hilly region, whereas the Indo-Aryan group is found in the lower hill and Terai region of Nepal. The former group allows women considerably greater economic freedom, such as taking up employment outside the local community, while the latter group restricts both women's social and economic mobility.

TANNING INDUSTRY

As present, the tanning industry in Nepal comprises of 15, mainly, small- to medium-scale tanneries. About 12 tanneries are located in the "Terai" region, with three more in the "Inner Terai" region.

The tanning industry produces 100 million square feet of semi-finished (wet-blue) leather every year and employs around 519 permanent and contract workers. Only 30% of the tanneries are equipped for production up to finished leather. Only few tanneries are or have started producing up to finished leather stage.

The working conditions in the leather production from raw to semi-finished stage (beam house and tan yard) are generally poor. The level of mechanization is low, the handling of raw material mainly done manually. Adequate personal protective equipment is not provided to the workers. Adequate basic facilities such as toilets, washing facilities and safe drinking water are available in a few tanneries only.

The working conditions in the semi-finished to finished production stage appear to be somewhat better, though

Another tannery, Bansbari Leather and Shoe Industries, formerly located in Kathmandu and now shifted to Nepalgunj, had been employing over 100 women workers in different finishing sections. To date, the tannery has not restarted its leather production. Most of the women workers in this tannery belonged to the Indo-Aryan groups.

LEATHER GOODS/CRAFT SECTOR

Most of the leather craft and leather goods manufacturing is organised on cottage and small-scale basis, mostly in the form of family business. The overall output of this sector is very limited.

Nepal has only very few well-established medium- and large-scale leather processing factories, producing shoes, shoe uppers and leather goods (e.g. industrial gloves). One example for shoe manufacture is the Birat Shoe Factory in Kathmandu, which currently employs around 150 workers, of whom over 70 % are women. Women workers were found in all production areas, performing the same work as their male colleagues. The women workers belong to different social groups.

Narayani Leather Manufacturing Industries, located at Birgunj, producing industrial leather gloves and aprons, employs nine women workers. All women workers are between 20 to 40 years old, belonging to lower income groups of the society. The manufacture of gloves includes production steps such as leather cutting, both manually and by machine, cloth cutting, stitching, trimming, grading and packing. All nine women are employed in cloth cutting used for lining of gloves. According to the supervisor, the reason for this is that processes such as leather cutting, stitching were too difficult and hard for women, while cloth cutting was an activity appropriate for women.

With regard to crafts sector, the various centers and organisations all over Nepal are providing employment to more than 1000 women, engaged in different crafts such as knitting, weaving, garment making. However, during the survey it was noticed that the larger, well-organized craft centers and women entrepreneurs associations did not concentrate on the further promotion of leather craft/goods sector, though they seemed convinced of the potential.

Reasons

- difficulty in finding skilled women for producing quality goods
- shortage in raw material supply over longer period
- lack of start-up capital
- market uncertainty

Aside from these factors, WEAN (Women Entrepreneur Association Nepal), an association with the aim of promoting the craft concept and women entrepreneurship development, was facing problems in encouraging women to enter new fields of handicraft (e.g. leather), arranging for organisational or institutional support in leather craft sector and providing skills to successfully start in the leather crafts sector.

Small leather goods manufacturing units are facing similar problems as the organized craft centers, particularly with regard to availability of skilled workers and good quality leather in local market. The units are totally dependent on Indian leather suppliers.

ASSOCIATED SECTORS

ADVISORY SERVICES AND TRAINING

The Leather Industry Coordination Cell (LICC) has been established by the Ministry of Industries with the objective of providing technical support to the tanning industry and training workers in leather craft and leather good manufacture. LICC is the only institute of its kind in Nepal, managing branches in Biratnagar and Hetauda. Though originally intended to also assist the tanning industry, the role of LICC is today more or less confined to the small-scale leather processing and craft sector.

Currently, LICC is headed by a woman and employs five women staff members as advisors and trainers. LICC organises three short- and one long term (4 and 12 months) training programme in basic leather craft every year. Women are increasingly showing interest in these training courses. Under the ongoing training programme for 1996/97 women constitute 22 of the 31 participants. Despite this encouraging trend, LICC is facing various problems such as difficulty in attracting more participants, high drop out rate and shortage of good quality finished leather. Around 50% of the women graduates find employment in leather craft and processing sector, or start their own business.

LEATHER TESTING

With regard to leather testing the Nepal Bureau of Standards and Metrology (NBSM) is the only organisation of its kind with a well equipped physical and chemical testing laboratory for leather and leather goods. NBSM provides testing services to leather manufacturing and leather good industries. To date, NBSM employs only one woman in the leather section, who is heading the small unit for leather testing.

ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORIES

Most of the government and private laboratories, working in the area of environment pollution control, are employing women scientists in different technical positions. In some private and educational/institutional laboratories, women are occupying key positions such as of executive director or director. However, in view of the small number of such laboratories and research centers, the sector provides only very limited employment opportunities to women.

FACTORS AFFECTING WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

The reasons for the small number of women employed in the leather production and processing can be summarised in three categories:

at the enterprise level

- unattractive and perceived difficult (heavy nature of work) working conditions in the leather production and processing industry
- lack of enthusiasm among employers for engaging women in tanning industry, due to anticipated discord in working environment

at the self-employment and craft level

- difficult supply and market conditions due to shortage as well as poor quality of raw material
- lack of facilities for skills up-gradation

socio-cultural perceptions and adverse attitudes in the society

- to leather production and processing as such, and
- to social and economic mobility of women

The tables 1 and 2 provide a further break-down of the relevant cause-effect relationships.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Prevalent wet, unclean and unsafe working conditions in tanneries - as assessed in a separate study by UNIDO in Nepal - equally apply to both men and women worker. Such existing conditions are the main reason for preventing women to join the tannery workforce as well as for employers to consider the sector unfit for women employment. On the other hand, dry finishing processes as well as conversion of leather into products are considered suitable for women employment. However, in terms of employment potential, expressed in absolute number of employees, the tanning and leather industry in Nepal, plays only a limited role. In addition to this - as pointed out earlier - most of the tanneries produce up to semi-finished stage only, providing even less opportunities for women to enter into the tannery workforce via positions in the dry finishing processes.

It is foreseen that growing environmental costs for pollution abatement and control and pressure by the government to extend production beyond wet-blue stage, may lead to a consolidation within the tanning industry, with the number of tanneries further reduced.

LACK OF SKILLS AND WORK EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN

Unemployment rate in Nepal's labour market is very high. So far as recruitment of unskilled workers in the leather production is concerned, employers prefer men, citing their physical strength and their general work experience. Due to this attitude, women are not able to gain the necessary work experience to compete with their male counterparts for these jobs.

in the leather conversion sector, however, a change could be observed. Though, work in shoe and leather goods factories, are still not socially acceptable with many communities, such employers select women workers. Employers in these industries believe that women are more productive and create less problems in labour relations. In these cases, skills and prior work experience play a minor role in the recruitment, since on-the-job training takes place. The good experience of some employers vis-à-vis engaging women workers is known in the tanning and leather community.

For the employment of women in case of leather finishing processes, the employers are reluctant to go ahead due lack of experience with women workers in such positions.

INSTITUTIONAL PROBLEMS IN LEATHER RELATED ACTIVITIES

Regarding women self-employment and entrepreneurship in the leather crafts/goods sector, the existing problems with respect to availability of skilled worker, adequate tools and equipment as well as raw material, as pointed out earlier, discourage many women to consider entering this sector.

Hardly any finished leather is freely sold in the open market. The larger part of the semi-finished leather, produced in Nepal, is exported. A small quantity of finished leather is converted in the few factories for leather goods and shoes. Even, if raw material could be made available on a regular basis, insufficient skills for achieving high quality standards result in low competitiveness of the products. For provision and/or up-gradation of relevant skills, various initiatives have been taken by governmental and non-governmental organisations. Though sincere in their approach, these activities so far have received only little response. This is mainly due to poor design of training activities, sometimes with little practical relevance and linkage to the leather craft sector, non-availability of adequate tools and equipment, as well as unfocused target group orientation.

Aside from this, both the organised and small-scale leather production and processing sectors, are facing competition in the local market from neighbouring countries.

Table 1 - Problems, causes and opportunities at the tannery level

Sr. No.	Problems perceived	Ground reality	Opportunities
	Tanning work demands physical strength.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All work is done manually No mechanical equipment is used for transferring loading/unloading. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide fork lift for loading unloading handling raw material. Provide trolleys to transport raw materials.
2.	Tanning work requires skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only few work areas need advanced skills Women are perceived as not able to learn General concept is that women can't learn and handle machines Women workers are slow to learn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce a skill development policy. Encouragement to women to learn. Awareness for self importance and dignity of work. Interventions by local social workers/NGOs and

Sr. No.	Problems perceived	Ground reality	Opportunities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women worker are illiterate and belong to poor families. • Women are not capable of taking decision. 	women skill development institutions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazardous work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor material and chemical handling practice. • Safety measures not provided • No equipment for transferring and dosing chemicals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training in hazardous materials. • Provide adequate personal protective equipment. • Arrange training on personal safety and health. • Provide appropriate means for handling hazardous substances.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor working conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor house keeping • Floor are slippery and drainage not functioning properly. • Waste material not removed frequently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce good house keeping. • Introduce and monitor day to day cleaning practice. • Introduce means to improve work environment
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wet blue production only. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High competition in finished products. • Difficult process quality control. • Defective raw materials. • Unqualified tanners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange quality improvement programme. • Encourage to produce finished leather products. • Develop and introduce good raw material conservation system. • Train tanners
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacking basic amenities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilets and washing facilities. • Tea or rest rooms. 	Provide separate clean toilets and washing facilities.

SOCIO-CULTURAL RESERVATIONS

Many of the various initiatives for the promotion of women employment in industries adopt and promote areas considered traditionally suitable for women. These are confined sewing and weaving. They struggle with overcoming prevalent social and religious constraints in the country related to production and processing of leather. A social stigma and a low class job label are affixed to any work with raw hides/skins and finished leather. Such work is associated with income generation of scheduled castes and tribes or religious minorities. Such attitudes are particularly prevalent among the Indo-Aryan population. Thus, women belonging to this community are discouraged by the community to take up such employment.

Besides these, mainly, religious sentiments, traditional attitudes resent social and economic mobility and

independence of women, confining their role to traditional functions inside the house or the village. Since these attitudes are mostly prevalent amongst communities in and around the industrial towns (e.g. Birgunj) in the Terai, the women of these areas are unlikely to join the workforce in the local industry, including tanneries, unless these mind-sets undergo a change. Such a change would be facilitated, if several women would be already working in these areas. It would also help the women to overcome a psychological barrier, in the way, that women prefer jobs where other women are already working.

Though Biratnagar, like Birgunj, belongs geographically to the Terai there are some social and cultural differences. The Biratnagar area is dominated by "Maithili" culture, whereas the Birgunj area by "Bhojpuri" social and cultural attitudes. Both cultures have their roots in Northern India (Bihar), however they differ in their attitude towards social mobility of women. Thus, in the case of Biratnagar and Hetauda, there is more scope for women from different communities to join the workforce in tanneries. However, this requires the tanneries to become a more attractive place to work for women.

Table 2 - Problem, causes and opportunities at socio-cultural level

Sr. No.	Problems perceived	Ground realities	Opportunities
1.	Job opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to get male worker • assumption that male worker output is higher • Management's role • Women employment could cause disturbance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and introduce policy to encourage women participation. • Social organisations should take lead role to change this concept • Government's intervention
2.	Human factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women worker lacks motivation. • Self importance is high • Lack of accountability culture. • Inability to share experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women entrepreneur association and social worker initiation and participation to develop self dignity and confidence.
3.	Work culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men and women working in same work area not encouraged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local social and cultural institutions. • Local industrial association
4.	Social/religious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job suitable only for schedule tribes or schedule castes • Women not to be bread winners • Not aware of economic benefit for house holds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local social and religious institutions participation . • Education.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the current situation and size of the leather production and processing industry, a possible approach for increasing women's participation should target simultaneously following three areas:

1. tanneries, already operating or extending their production from semi-finished to finished
2. laboratories, R&D institutions, consulting companies, etc.
3. leather conversion units (shoes, garments and goods)
4. leather craft sector

Provision and up-gradation of skills and overcoming of socio-cultural perceptions towards working with leather are equally applicable to all three areas, though the interventions may differ in their intensity. Particularly, (2) and (3) may prove as the most suitable gateways to overcoming socio-cultural perceptions for immediate increase in women's participation.

PROMOTION AND ADVOCACY

Considering the conservative nature of tannery and present socio-cultural tradition including negative attitude of tannery owners it is difficult to find a receptive tannery to employ women workers. It should be considered while selecting such tannery that employer has some experience in employing women worker in allied fields. Secondly the male workers of the tannery should have positive attitude towards fellow women workers. Such selected tannery could be developed as demonstration site or best practitioners amongst the tanneries and play the role of catalyst amongst the women workers.

During the visit of tanneries of Biratnagar where women workers were employed it was found that there were no separate toilets or washing facilities for women. In general all basic amenities were completely missing in most of the tanneries visited. In order to improve general work environment, it is necessary to provide basic facilities such as toilets, washing places, drinking water and tea or rest rooms for workers.

Manual material handling is a common problem in all tanneries. To cope with the work nature especially when hides are processed strong physical labour is needed. To encourage women participation in tanning

work improved material handling practices and facilities may be desirable.

Basic principles of ergonomics are another area that should be kept in view while employing women workers. Inappropriate seating not only results in common work-related illnesses, these will also affect the work efficiency and productivity.

Chemical handling is another area of concern in material handling. Tanning industry uses many hazardous chemicals. Existing chemical handling practices are not safe. Workers are not provided with simple protective clothing and equipment. There is a common notion in society that leather processing is a hazardous and unclean work. To change such notions it is necessary to improve existing chemical handling practices by providing adequate tools, equipment and personal protective gear.

SOCIAL MOBILISATION

As pointed out, promotion of women employment in the tanning and leather sector requires first overcoming social and cultural barriers. Traditionally, such work is associated with specific castes and tribes. Women, belonging to a conservative caste, find it difficult to break this barrier.

Only through strong social awareness creation and motivation, possibly emphasizing on the expected economic gain, a change can be introduced in the existing social atmosphere. At the same time, a change and improvement of the perceptions and image of leather production and conversion, accompanied with measures to actually making tanneries a safe and clean place to work, will be required. It should however be emphasized that it is unrealistic to expect the women employment pattern in the tanning industry to be dissimilar to what is prevailing in the industrial sector in general.

Nevertheless, a social awareness programme, has to be carried out through existing institutional network (government, NGO), which is able to reach clearly specified target groups.

IMPROVEMENT OF WORKING CONDITIONS

The general production from raw to finished product is presented in table 3. It shows that tanning process involves physical labour as well as skills. Except in two

tanneries of Biratnagar, in all other tanneries the leather processing from raw to semi-finished or finished product is done by men workers. In these tanneries it has almost become a tradition to employ male workers in all process units.

Table 3 - Activity profile in tanning industry

	Work	Worker engaged	Reasons given for not employing women
1	Raw hide sorting, grading, storing	male	physical strength required
2	Trimming	male	always done this way
3	Beamhouse work	male	physical strength required
4	Tan yard	male	physical strength required
5	Sammying	male	technical skills required
6	Toggling	male	technical skills required
7	Padding	male	technical skills required
8	Spraying, dyeing	male	technical skills required
9	Sorting/grading/measuring/packing	male	technical skills required

It is but a human nature that when new changes are introduced it can affect the distribution of responsibility, work procedure and production output in terms of quality and quantity, either positively or negatively.

Above table shows that replacement of male worker by female worker in some process unit area does not affect the productivity of the process. There is some effect in beam house process area but it can be overcome by replacing manual handling of raw material by semi mechanized means.

Considering the present work and employment practice a tremendous effort is necessary to introduce women's participation in tanning industry. In the present context when so many different causes and problems are attached to the issue it is necessary to maintain cooperation and coordination with different social, cultural and industrial institutions.

UP-GRADATION OF SKILLS

Workforce in tanneries

It is necessary to provide further on-the-job training to women workers that will help them learn basic tanning process. Such training will provide inputs needed to develop work confidence and motivation. Furthermore it

will also act as a catalyst towards learning that is necessary for the women's overall development.

Entrepreneurship and self-employment in leather crafts

Existing training set-ups with government and non-governmental organisations may seek assistance in revising the training programmes. WEAN may seek assistance in establishing a separate training course on leather crafts under their existing set-up. For doing so the collaboration of bi-lateral or multi-lateral organisations or a local company may be sought to provide the necessary infrastructure support.

SUGGESTED PLAN OF ACTION

Based on the forgoing analytical approach to identify the problems and their causes related to the women participation in tannery following approach could be adopted to initiate women employment in tanneries.

Table 4 - Overview of recommended activities

ACTIVITY	SHORT-TERM	LONG-TERM	REMARKS
Advocacy to overcome adverse perceptions amongst employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convince tanner in Hetauda to employ women to set visible example for others. Train women on-the-job in machine operation and deploy them on the same Consider activities in the field of gender sensitisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide forum as well as recognition to tanners employing women. 	
Improvement of working conditions at work			To be covered by the activities under OSH
Social mobilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare social awareness programme in cooperation with NGOs and government institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement awareness programme 	
Skill up-gradation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist interested tanners in setting-up appropriate on-the-job training. Assess further training needs with WEAN and LICC Prepare or adapt focused training programme with the help of International Expert 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up-grade training facilities and infrastructure Institutionalise training programme with suitable counterparts and introduce placement mechanism 	

ANNEX I**PROFILE OF WOMEN IN THE TANNING INDUSTRY**

- Employment Average age: 20 - 40
- Preferred: Married
- Mostly from backward poor community.
- Education: Illiterate
- With no alternative employment opportunity.
- Unskilled labour as helper or for packaging on daily basis/on contract.

Note: Only two tanneries were found employing women. In one tannery women were mostly from Muslim community while in second belonging to many communities.

ANNEX II**PROFILE OF WOMEN IN THE LEATHER PRODUCT INDUSTRY**

- Most of the women regular contracts
- Average age: No age bar between 16 to 50.
- Martial status: No bar
- Mostly from lower middle or middle class.
- Women mostly belonging to Indo - Aryan group.
- Women from SC/SC not present.
- Education : Young women literate.
- Employment at all levels, no feminisation of work.