GENDER EQUALITY RESULTS CASE STUDY

SRI LANKA

IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY TO SUPPORT LIVELIHOODS AND GENDER EQUALITY

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

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Contents

Tables and Box

Tables

Box

Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CBO	community-based organization
RAR	rural access roads
WRDS	women's rural development society

Sri Lanka: Improving Connectivity to Support Livelihoods and Gender Equality

Summary

DEVELOPMENT AIMS AND IMPACTS

(i) The Improving Connectivity to Support Livelihoods and Gender Equality project (JFPR 9143) supported the rehabilitation of over 290 kilometers of rural access roads (RARs) with the construction of supporting structures such as culverts, causeways, and retaining walls in four districts in Sri Lanka. These roads improved access to markets, schools, and health care facilities. Women who participated in the survey identified improved access for children to schools as the primary benefit.

(ii) Women constituted 66% of the direct beneficiaries of the project through their participation in road rehabilitation work and livelihood training. This was significantly more than the target of 50% built into the project design. Women's participation in road rehabilitation enabled them to enhance their contributions to family incomes and, subsequently, in many cases, increase their livelihood options.

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK PROCESSES AND MANAGEMENT TOOLS

(i) This project grant employed innovative, gender-related activities and outcomes. Its design elements included (i) a baseline exercise where a gender and vulnerability analysis was done to monitor results, (ii) targets for women's participation in project activities, (iii) engagement of women's rural development societies (WRDSs), (iv) training of women in nontraditional livelihood activities, and (v) assessment of rural transport services that included the identification of gender-related constraints.

Main Aims and Approaches

The Improving Connectivity to Support Livelihoods and Gender Equality project (JFPR 9143) was supported by a grant of $3 million from the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR) and administered by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).[1] The initiative was carried out in immediate postconflict Sri Lanka and was part of urgently needed reconstruction

[1] This case study is based on an internal ADB document: *Improving Connectivity to Support Livelihoods and Gender Equality—JFPR 9143: A Case Study*. June 2014. This is referred to as the "Field Case Study."

and rehabilitation efforts. The civil war lasted almost 30 years and left more than 130,000 people dead. The Northern, North Central, and Eastern provinces were all affected by the conflict, with the Northern and Eastern provinces, in particular, suffering severe disruption and devastation. Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced, infrastructure was destroyed, and livelihoods were shattered.

The primary objective of the grant was to improve connectivity and quality of life of conflict-affected and isolated poor communities in selected districts of the Eastern and North Central provinces of Sri Lanka (Trincomalee and Batticaloa in the Eastern Province, and Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa in the North Central Province).

The grant was intended to

(i) support the rehabilitation and maintenance of the rural access roads (RARs), thereby enabling local communities to access the rehabilitated provincial road network;
(ii) promote skills development for rural communities, particularly vulnerable groups;
(iii) identify options to upgrade rural transport services; and
(iv) document social and gender-related results.

Box: Project Basic Facts

Grant number:	39619-02 (JFPR 9143)
Grant approval:	December 2009
Closing date:	February 2013
Executing agency:	Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils
Overall project cost:	$3,429,056
Financing:	JFPR grant: $3 million Government: $100,000 Community contribution: $329,056
Gender classification:	Gender Equity Theme (GEN)

JFPR = Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction.
Note: JFPR grant attached to the Eastern and North Central Provincial Road Project (ENCPRP).
Source: ADB. 2009. *Grant Assistance Report: Proposed Grant Assistance Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka: Improving Connectivity to Support Livelihoods and Gender Equality*. Manila.

There were five project components:

(i) Component A: Project Baseline and Performance Monitoring System ($35,000), which set out a series of activities to monitor progress focusing on poverty reduction, on capacity and training needs assessments of district and local governments as well as civil society organizations and community-based organizations (CBOs), and on gender equality and women's empowerment dimensions.

(ii) Component B: Rehabilitation and Maintenance of RARs ($2,488,430), which was the largest component and primary focus of the initiative and was designed to support the rehabilitation of at least 250 kilometers of RARs. About 2,340 male and female workers (with a target of 50% female workers) were to be selected from 60 poor and marginalized villages to participate in a cash-for-work initiative, with 40% compulsory savings to support self-employment. Target villages were selected from 29 approved divisional secretariat divisions of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Trincomalee, and Batticaloa districts. Four local nongovernment organizations—one for each district—were set to be recruited to supervise the cash-for-work program and build the capacity of the CBOs. A second subcomponent was to support capacity development for potential road caretakers to ensure the ongoing maintenance of the RARs.

(iii) Component C: Skills Development for Rural Communities ($46,900), which provided resources to strengthen the capacity of the local communities (with a focus on women's rural development societies, or WRDSs) to strengthen livelihood skills and assist in income-generating activities. The original intent was to develop the capacities of existing WRDSs and provide relevant skills training in both traditional and nontraditional areas, marketing, and technical and financial support.

(iv) Component D: Developing Rural Transportation Services ($35,000), which sought to carry out a rapid, low-cost assessment of rural transport services (passengers and freight), including economic, technical, sociocultural, and gender-related constraints to the provision of rural transport services, and identify options to overcome them.

(v) Component E: Project Administration, Implementation Support, Monitoring, and Auditing ($251,813), which supported the project implementation unit.[2]

Key Gender Equality Issues Related to the Aims of the Project

Rehabilitated and improved rural roads are beneficial to women, girls, men, and boys, as travel becomes convenient, faster, and safer, with better access to social services, such as education and health care. Business owners can gain access to new markets for their products. However, given gender roles, relations, and inequalities, investments in rural roads result in different constraints and opportunities for women, girls, men, and boys as listed below:

(i) Women and men have different travel purposes and patterns. Women tend to make shorter and more frequent local trips than men do. Thus, the use of rehabilitated roads and the benefits derived from these roads by women and men can be different. It cannot be assumed that all will benefit equally.

[2] The same project implementation unit simultaneously implemented JFPR Grant Project 9150: Post-Conflict Emergency Assistance for Livelihood Restoration of Resettled Internally Displaced People in the North.

(ii) Improved rural roads can make travel by bicycle and motorized transport more feasible. Women and men tend to have differential access to these modes of transportation. Even if a family owns a bicycle, women may not have the first call on its use. They may have to adapt their schedules to those of the male family members.

(iii) Road rehabilitation initiatives provide short-term employment. There is a growing recognition of the importance and viability of setting targets for women's employment in these initiatives. This can provide women with the needed income, new skills, and confidence. However, in some cases, women may require support to take on these new opportunities, especially given women's existing workloads and multiple roles. Equal pay for women and men is a crucial principle to be observed.

(iv) Inequalities, differences, and gender relations within households also influence how and if women benefit equally with men from increases in household income and new livelihood options. Decision making and resources within the family may not be shared equally.

(v) Women's ability to start new businesses or expand existing income-generating opportunities is often constrained by lack of time (given women's responsibility for household tasks), social norms, attitudes (what is an "appropriate" business sector for women), and restricted access to commercial resources (such as credit, business skills, and knowledge of markets).

(vi) Women, men, boys, and girls also have different safety concerns on roads. Traveling at night may not be an option for women and girls, even on newly rehabilitated roads, if there are concerns regarding potential violence or harm.

In other countries, a new or rehabilitated road, as part of rural roads initiatives, could pose new challenges for women and girls, such as an increased risk of the spread of sexually transmitted infections (including HIV) and/or human trafficking (if the roads are close to international borders). Thus, assessing the gender equality impact involves more than just saying that women benefited from the rehabilitated roads. The challenge is to assess if and how the new roads contributed to the narrowing of gender inequalities. It is important to explore whether there were differential benefits for women and men and how these affected gender roles, relations, and inequalities.

Project Plan for Involving Women and Addressing Gender Disparities

The project did not have a gender action plan, but had important gender equality dimensions built into each component (Table 1). One of the four overall innovative elements noted in the project design was the focus on gender, specifically the assessment of sex-disaggregated baseline as well as social and gender equality results based on a set of agreed targets and indicators.

Table 1: Gender Equality Elements in the Project Design

Component	Specific, Planned Activities Related to Gender Equality in the Project Design
Component A: Project Baseline and Performance Monitoring System	The baseline and monitoring component emphasized gender analysis, sex-disaggregated data, and the monitoring of gender equality results: (i) A national research institute with established capability was expected to carry out gender-related social research and analysis to develop a baseline poverty mapping and social, gender, and vulnerability analysis, complemented by an assessment of the availability and accessibility of basic services (health centers, schools, and other education facilities). (ii) Poverty and income distribution household surveys were to be conducted at the onset and at the completion of the project in the selected districts, and complemented by qualitative surveys to assess if and when rural infrastructure development leads to improved quality of life for rural communities, particularly women and other vulnerable groups. (iii) A capacity and training needs assessment of district and local government, civil society organizations—nongovernment organizations and community-based organizations (CBOs)—and other stakeholders involved in implementing project activities was to be conducted in the selected districts. (iv) A project performance monitoring system was to be established to (a) monitor progress toward the achievement of agreed social and gender-related targets and indicators and (b) generate information on the relationship between rural infrastructure development, social and gender-related results, and women's empowerment.
Component B: Rehabilitation and Maintenance of RARs	One of the seven selection criteria for participating villages was high numbers of war widows and households headed by women. Project design included the target of "50% women workers" in road rehabilitation. Women's rural development societies were to be included in the CBOs receiving capacity development in road maintenance. There was a target of "50% women participants" for receiving training in handling small equipment to maintain the roads.
Component C: Skills Development for Rural Communities	The capacity-building initiatives were to focus on the women's rural development societies. The skills provided were to be in both traditional and nontraditional areas for women.
Component D: Developing Rural Transportation Services	Activities in the project design included (i) working with the CBOs to identify socioculturally acceptable ways to promote greater access by women and vulnerable groups to motorized and nonmotorized transport services; and (ii) encouraging the development of micro and small transport enterprises owned by women.

Source: Project description provided in the field case study.

Key Achievements and Lessons

Gender Equality Results

The project achieved the following gender equality and women's empowerment results:

(i) **Significant participation by women in project activities.** The project exceeded its initial target of 50% women's participation with women constituting 66% of the direct beneficiaries.

The training component also targeted 50% women's participation, which was exceeded as well. Short training courses on enterprise development, cattle farming, poultry farming, small trade and business, and commercial home gardening were given to 1,529 women and 605 men. Eight types of vocational training courses (including electrical wiring, driving, tailoring, Montessori teaching, welding, automobile mechanics, and beauty culture and hairstyling) were provided to 154 youths (84 females and 70 males) from project beneficiary families in the four districts. While most women engaged in economic activities in traditional sectors, one woman learned to drive a three-wheeled scooter taxi and transported children to school to make a living. The final progress report of the project implementation unit states that 74% of the trainees under the 5- to 15-day "semi-skilled" training program were women, which exceeded expectations. Topics of relevance to women were dairy farming, home gardening, handicrafts, and cookery. Of the nine topics covered in the more comprehensive 3-month vocational training courses, three topics were those traditionally preferred by women, such as dressmaking, preschool teaching, and beauty culture and hair styling.

(ii) **Increases in both household incomes and women's incomes among project participants.** With the income earned from roadworks, participating women were able to increase their contributions to overall household incomes (Table 2).

Table 2: Increase in Incomes

	Anuradhapura District	Polonnaruwa District	Trincomalee District	Batticaloa District
Percentage of beneficiaries who experienced an increase in household income	85.3	93.9	89.7	86.5
Percentage of nonbeneficiaries who experienced an increase in household income	15.7	25.8	42.1	53.7
Percentage of women contributing equally to household income before the project	20.8	51.2	26.0	10.9
Percentage of women contributing equally to household income at project closure	21.6	54.4	44.0	35.3

Source: Performance monitoring survey (2012), JFPR 9143 project implementation unit, Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils.

The performance monitoring survey conducted by the project implementation unit in 2012 reported that women were the sole income earners in approximately 15% of households. After road rehabilitation, women's contributions to household finances improved slightly with variation among districts. The percentage of women contributing equally to household finances rose by 20%–25% in Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts, with a more modest increase of 2%–3% in Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa districts. It must be noted that Batticaloa and Trincomalee were both conflict-affected areas and were also devastated by the 2004 tsunami. The social fabric and the economic infrastructure in these districts were severely damaged leaving people with limited income-earning opportunities. Batticaloa and Trincomalee also have a higher number of war widows and households headed by women when compared with the other project districts.

(iii) **Improved RARs did bring benefits for all, including women.** This was the primary benefit noted by beneficiaries in the 2014 field case study survey (Table 3). All beneficiaries had improved access to services and markets. For 30%–50% of women, the most favorable and positive impact was improvement in children's travel to school.

Table 3: Key Impact Areas

Main Benefit	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Convenience	182	55
Income	106	32
Time saving	43	13
Total	**331**	**100**

Source: Field case study survey (May–June 2014).

Almost all beneficiaries acknowledged that there has been a reduction in travel time due to road rehabilitation, although the time saved was not quantified. The project did track changes in overall transportation modes. All four districts witnessed a decline in foot traffic. Prior to the project, 39.7% of trips were by foot; following the rehabilitation of the roads, this decreased to 31.1%. All the other modes of travel (bicycle, motorcycle, car/van/bus, truck, and three-wheeled vehicle) witnessed marginal increases, with the largest increase attributed to the bicycle.

There were differences across project sites. For example, in Batticaloa, foot travel declined from 40.8% to 25.6% of trips. All four areas witnessed an increase in bicycle traffic. Again, looking at Batticaloa, the percentage of trips by bicycle rose from 55.1% to 63.5%. Interestingly, in Polonnaruwa, there were only marginal changes after road rehabilitation (foot trips declined from 35.3% to 34.0%, and bicycle trips rose from 47.8% to 48.1% only).[3]

[3] Data are from the Performance Monitoring Survey (2012), JFPR 9143 Project Implementation Unit, quoted in the case study. Unfortunately, sex-disaggregated data are not available, so it is not known if there were differences in women's and men's transportation patterns.

Although exact data are not available, the field case study team observed an increased number of women using motorcycles on the rehabilitated roads.

(iv) **Innovations in project design and achievement.** The strategy of employing people in the communities for road improvement and rehabilitation has had major impact on the quality of life (e.g., time savings and improved safety) of the communities, especially of women and children. The additional income during road rehabilitation has been well received as it can also serve as a means of sustenance during natural disasters, for example, droughts that result in low agricultural output. The field case study team found a high degree of enthusiasm among the beneficiaries for the project concept.

In addition to the above gender equality results, a significant finding of the field case study was that 75% of the beneficiaries surveyed did invest their savings in livelihoods development.[4] While these investments were primarily made to improve existing livelihoods rather than expand into new ventures, they have had an impact on the improvement of food security in the project area. It is noted that 73% of the beneficiaries invested part or all of their savings in livelihood improvement. Of these, around half invested in activities related to the improvement of food security, either by expanding existing ventures or commencing new ventures. Crop farming was the preferred option, with investments also in livestock (both cattle and goats), poultry, and fisheries, depending on the locality.

Furthermore, about 10% of the beneficiaries reported investing all their project-derived savings in constructing or improving their homes, while others did so with part of their savings. Field visits indeed found recent house construction or renovation activities. Moreover, nearly all beneficiaries reported improvements in access to health services, especially for emergency cases because of the rehabilitated roads which have increased speed of small three- or four-wheeled vehicles.

Findings from the Transport Study

The transportation study under Component D was carried out in the four districts. Key findings by district are summarized in Table 4. The findings and conclusions of the surveys are broadly similar across all four districts.

(i) **Village-level fleet ownership.** Most of the households (90% or more) have bicycles. Women are regular users of bicycles, especially in the Eastern Province.

Motorcycle ownership is prevalent but varies widely, with an average of 30% of households owning motorcycles. Two-wheeled tractors are also prevalent with an average ownership rate of 20%–30%. These tractors and the associated small trailers are used for the transportation of people besides agricultural use. One or two mini trucks are found in some villages. In the north and east of the country, because of their flat terrains, bicycles are a cost-effective and popular mode of transport for both males and females. Furthermore, the use of motor vehicles

[4] The other participants dedicated their savings to day-to-day consumption and health/education expenditures.

Table 4: Findings from Rapid Surveys of Transportation

	Anuradhapura District	Polonnaruwa District	Trincomalee District	Batticaloa District
Fleet ownership at village level	Around 90% bicycle ownership, wide variation in motorcycle ownership (10%–70%), two-wheeled tractors, four-wheeled tractors, three-wheeled vehicles, trucks (% of ownership not indicated).	Around 90% bicycle ownership, 30% motorcycle ownership, 30%–60% two-wheeled tractor ownership. Less than 10% three-wheeled vehicle ownership.	Around 90% bicycle ownership, 20% motorcycle ownership. Around 20%–30% two-wheeled tractor ownership.	Around 90% bicycle ownership (high ownership by women), 10%–30% motorcycle ownership, a few two-wheeled tractors, negligible three- to four-wheel vehicle ownership.
Roles of men and women	Traditional patterns seen. Men play a more active role in external interaction with authorities and banks. Men fetch water due to threat of wild elephants at some locations.	Traditional division of labor; however, women demonstrate active participation and often take leadership in community activities.	Women have more interaction with external agencies when compared with the other districts. Men also assist in the traditional female activities such as fetching water.	Traditional division of labor. Women assist in some farming tasks. Sample mainly of Tamil ethnicity.
Travel patterns	Men travel outside the village while women mainly travel within the village.	Men travel more outside the village, while women travel less and limit themselves to the village.	Travel outside the village mainly undertaken by men, while women are more likely to move around the village, however, to a lesser extent than those in the other districts.	Women usually travel within the village only, except when needed to go to hospitals and schools. They travel long distances to fetch water.
Constraints and issues	In some areas, public transport, specifically buses, do not regularly ply the main road, thereby limiting the benefits of the rehabilitated RAR.	Transport ownership by women viewed as unrealistic by the respondents.	Irregular public transport at the main road minimizes the benefits of the rehabilitated RARs. Wild elephants a major factor limiting freedom of travel.	Irregular public transport at the nearest main road (one to two trips per day). Wild elephants affect mobility on some of the rehabilitated RARs. Project aim of improving transport ownership by women seen as unrealistic.
Impact of RAR rehabilitation	Positive, with time savings and improved overall quality of life.	Positive impact. One road in sample has poor connectivity since only a section was rehabilitated.	Positive impact despite a few defects in the surveyed roads.	Positive impact, with time savings and convenience. Has improved connectivity in an area where essential services are distantly located.

RAR = rural access road.

Source: Summary done by the field case study team.

was severely restricted and public transport services were minimal during the conflict period. A poor, rural family may own a bicycle, but its use would be the prerogative of the one who travels the farthest, which often would be the male family members.

(ii) **Roles of men and women.** Almost all the villages surveyed practice traditional roles for men and women. Men assist women in some household tasks, such as fetching firewood and water, since these, especially water, may be available some distance away. A bicycle or motorcycle is sometimes used.

(iii) **Travel patterns.** Men were more likely to travel out of the village for employment and interaction with public agencies. Women, on the contrary, limited their travel outside the village except for marketing and visits to hospitals. The field case study team notes that this does not imply that there are restrictions for women to travel outside the village.

(iv) **Constraints and issues.** Despite the rehabilitation of sections of the village roads under grant assistance, some external factors affect optimal use of the improved roads. The survey revealed that public transport (buses) on the main roads serving the RARs was either infrequent or irregular, adding to travel time. The survey also found that many respondents stated that it was unrealistic to expect rural women to own motorized vehicles since this was outside current norms.

In all the districts, the threat from wild elephants was an important factor in transport patterns. In areas where this threat was extreme, the villagers did not venture out of their homes after 3 p.m. Men have the added responsibility of providing protection to women and children in these instances.

(v) **Impact of RARs rehabilitation.** The respondents in all districts and the RARs surveyed had reported positively on the benefits from the rehabilitated roads.

Project Challenges

Several elements of the initiative met significant challenges:

(i) Implementation of Component A was delayed.[5] The baseline study (with sex-disaggregated data) was not done according to plan. It was finally undertaken as a performance monitoring survey in 2012 just prior to the project completion. The postwar sensitivity and slower-than-expected reconstruction of the social fabric in the project area affected the project's ability to gather sex-disaggregated baseline data and analyze the gender-related results and impacts of the project.

(ii) The planned mobilization of communities for road maintenance did not take place because of inadequate resources of the implementing partner nongovernment organizations. The field case study team visiting villages in mid-2014 found that in three-quarters of the cases, caretakers had been named to be responsible for road maintenance as requested by the local authorities. However, other than people

[5] A senior official told the field case study team that implementation issues such as those relating to the delays in the baseline survey and monitoring systems were mainly due to the necessity of applying ADB and government procedures, design for a typical 5-year project, to a tightly scheduled 2-year time frame.

tending to the road near their own homes, little work had been done to keep the roads and drains on either side in top form. The field case study team assessed that a two year project cannot be expected to spawn sustainable community participation in road maintenance, and that post-project road maintenance on a voluntary basis is unrealistic given that the initial road work was paid for.[6]

(iii) Another objective of the project was to increase women's confidence and ability to interact with government officials. The mid-2014 field case study found that 94% of participants said that there had been no change in their interactions with officials. Interactions with government officials had been limited to a few meetings at the start of the project, and around 86% of participants did not meet with officials on a regular basis—the majority of people in the sample were women (Table 5).

Table 5: Engagements with Government Officials at the Start of and After the Project

	Females		Males		Total	
Interactions with Government	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Start of project						
No regular interactions	91	91	35	76	126	86
With interactions	9	9	11	24	20	14
Total	**100**	**100**	**46**	**100**	**146**	**100**
After the project						
No regular interactions or no change	95	95	42	91	137	94
With better interactions	5	5	4	9	9	6
Total	**100**	**100**	**46**	**100**	**146**	**100**

Source: Field case study survey (May–June 2014).

(iv) Component C aimed to support sustainable livelihoods through developing the capacity of existing WRDSs in training local communities, especially women, in farm activities, nonfarm activities, women's nontraditional skills, accessing financial services, and marketing. This engagement of WRDSs however did not materialize.

(v) Though the target number of training courses and participants were met and, in some cases, also exceeded, the field case study found the training courses too short to be of lasting benefit. The average duration of similar programs in Sri Lanka is 10–30 days. The vast majority of courses given under Component C were held in 1–2 days. The exception was vocational training in areas such as tailoring, welding, auto-mechanics, driving, and preschool teaching.

For training topics given in 1-2 days, an alternative is to identify one or two livelihood ventures (such as dairy farming) with better potential of generating income and then provide sufficient number of training days on improving skills in these ventures. Of the training participants, 148 (5%) of the trainees participated

[6] The field case study team found the top two responses for nonmaintenance of roads were "No payment for maintenance" (38%) and "No organization in place to support and coordinate this work" (24%).

in these vocational courses. There is, however, no sex-disaggregated data on these participants and as to whether they found employment in their field after completion of the course.

What Else Could We Look at When Assessing Gender Equality Results?

A key prerequisite to understanding how the rehabilitated roads benefited women and men is sex-disaggregated data. If Component A had been implemented in a timely manner, it might have been possible to understand and more efficiently document the changes related to gender roles, responsibilities, work, and relations. Improving this type of data collection and analysis is crucial to documenting gender equality results and impacts.

In addition to better data collection, the following issues could be explored in future initiatives:

(i) **Better understanding of intrahousehold dynamics.** Intrafamily relations, decision-making structures, and allocation of resources influence who benefits from improved rural roads. The promise of "improvements for all" cannot just be assumed but has to be tested and proven. Improved family incomes may not be shared equally nor will they automatically result in equitable benefits for all family members. Women may not control their own incomes or have a say in how family expenditures are made. Also, male family members may claim first priority for transportation resources such as bicycles. Thus, it is important to include an understanding of results at this level.

(ii) **Supporting nontraditional livelihood options for women.** The project design includes training women in nontraditional livelihoods. Although many women may be comfortable with traditional female occupations (sewing, hair styling,), these sectors are often oversaturated and have little possibility for expansion. It is thus important to encourage, train and support women to engage in nontraditional livelihoods that have a better potential of generating income. However, experience has shown that it is not enough to train young women in these nontraditional areas. To be successful, these programs must also work with communities to increase their acceptance of women moving into these areas and provide support for innovative women as they break new grounds. There must also be a larger environment that is more receptive to this. This requires a longer-term intervention, which was not feasible in the short project period.

(iii) **Strengthening opportunities for women to voice their preferences and tell their own stories.** The project design originally intended to work with WRDSs; however, this did not happen, although other CBOs were involved. Women's organizations are important vehicles for women to gain skills and confidence, as well as influence community decisions. Future initiatives could relook at the possibility of working with and strengthening these organizations so that they can play meaningful roles.

This case study was produced by the Sri Lanka Resident Mission in consultation with the executing and implementing agency. It builds on information included in the project progress report and on direct consultations with executing and implementing agency and the beneficiaries, as well as inputs from ADB project officers.

About the Asian Development Bank

ADB's vision is an Asia and Pacific region free of poverty. Its mission is to help its developing member countries reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of their people. Despite the region's many successes, it remains home to the majority of the world's poor. ADB is committed to reducing poverty through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.

Based in Manila, ADB is owned by 67 members, including 48 from the region. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.

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