A BASELINE STUDY OF WOMEN'S ISSUES IN TUVALU

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Executive Summary

The baseline study of women's issues in Tuvalu was undertaken between 16 and 30 November 2000. The objectives of the study were to:

i) assess women's issues in the thirteen critical areas of concern in the Pacific Platform for Action (PPA), and

ii) identify policy and planning implications for the improvement of women, children and the nation.

The conclusions of the study show a number of areas requiring Tuvalu Government assistance in collaboration with interested donors and regional agencies to improve the status of women, and the need to involve women in all aspects of development. The following summarises the current status of women in Tuvalu.

i) Health

The general health status of women in Tuvalu is poor as reflected by the poor health status of children. Mothers need to be provided with economic and social services including clean water, health care and family planning education and services and functional literacy to help them provide the best care for the family's basic needs. Respiratory infections and diarrhoeal diseases are the major cause of morbidity in children. Respiratory infections accounted for more than 50 per cent of diseases in children under five years of age in 1989 (Government of Tuvalu 1996). Reported cases of acute respiratory infections among children of less than 11 months increased from 140 in 1996 to 251 in 1999. Similarly, reported cases of diarrhoeal diseases among the same age group also increased from 81 to 252 between 1996 and 1999. It was also reported that child morbidity and mortality is highest within the first year of life, especially during the neonatal period and at birth. The number of children less than 11 months old with diarrhoea is reported to have increased between 1996 and 1999, implying the need for further improvement in water and sanitation facilities.

The health of women is affected by their reproductive role. Diseases of the reproductive system and complications from birth or pregnancy are common. Other related reproductive diseases of concern include sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and cancer of the cervix and breast. However, reported cases are low because many women do not openly discuss these diseases during a medical check up. Non-communicable diseases such as arthritis/gout, diabetes, and hypertension are high in Tuvalu. It was reported that cases of hypertension and diabetes are much higher among women than men. Between 1994 and 1998, live births by married and single

mothers between ages 15 and 19 were high in Funafuti. There is fear that young people in urban areas are at great risk of STDs and HIV/AIDs and the dangers of long-term reproductive health problems.

ii) Education and training (formal and non-formal)

Female participation in education at all levels, except in-service training, is relatively high. Between 1998 and 2000, of the total pre-service scholars, 102 were females and 88 were males. Among USP extension students enrolled in 1998 and 1999, there were more women than men taking courses. There is relatively low female's participation in the area of in-service training, with 26 females and 65 males according to August 2000 records; however, the trend is likely to change in the near future, with the completion of new graduates, who are predominantly women.

The training of disabled children is one area where government has given little attention due to limited resources, although it is on the agenda for future development. The Red Cross is the only non-governmental organisation that looks into the needs of disabled children; however, financial resources are required to effectively implement a programme. If disable children receive proper training, they will contribute productively to their families and communities, and more importantly, mothers will be relieved.

iii) Economic empowerment

The increased participation of females in education has led to the growing demand of their services in the labour force. In 1973, there were 73 women employed in the cash sector compared with 505 in 1991. The number of women employed in the formal sector has increased between 1979 and 1991, particularly in the areas of professional and technical jobs, clerical, sales and service work. Within the professional and technical area, the majority of women are primary school teachers and nurses (which relate to traditional roles of women in Tuvaluan society) working on the outer islands. Hence, women outnumber men in the professional and technical positions in rural areas. The majority of women engaged in administrative positions are in the 30 to 44 age group compared with men, the majority of whom are 45 years and over. Most professional women are between the ages of 15 and 44, compared with professional men, aged 15 and over 45. Obviously, young women are gradually taking over positions predominantly occupied by men.

Limited access to credit facilities remains the concern for unemployed women, especially those with interests and skills to run a business. Tuvalu Development Bank stopped giving loans to the public in 1998, and has now concentrated on recovering outstanding loans. In addition, the National Bank of Tuvalu (commercial bank) only lends money to employed men and women.

iv) Agriculture and fishing (formal and informal)

The contribution of agriculture to GDP is around 20 per cent in recent years, with copra being the traditional export commodity. Copra production began in the 1840s with the making of coconut oil, switching over to copra exports around 1870. It was also reported that there is a decline in the cultivation and production of giant swamp taro in Tuvalu as evidenced by a number of abandoned pits. Environmental factors, dependency on imported foods and placing emphasis on cash crops have contributed to low subsistence agricultural productivity. The contribution of women to agricultural development is reflected in the growing domestic and export sales of handicrafts, as well as the production of copra, sweet potatoes, vegetables, chickens and ducks, as they are largely involved in these economic activities.

Traditionally, women played an important role in fishing in the nearshore areas, especially during bad weather when men were unable to go out fishing. Reef gleaning, reef fishing, fish processing and marketing, which are mainly done by women, are not considered fishing activities. Although women rely heavily on reef resources for food and cash, they are hardly ever involved in fisheries development programme. Fisheries development programme activities that involve banning fishing activities, do not involve women or help them to understand the reasoning behind implementing such programmes. Consequently, women are not aware of conservation methods for managing reef resources (Lilian Fay, pers. comm., November 2000).

v) Legal and human rights

Although the Tuvalu Bill of Rights provides for freedom of discrimination, stating that no person shall be treated in a 'discriminatory manner based on the person's race, place of origin, political opinions, colour or religious beliefs', gender is not included.

While the Tuvalu Constitution makes provisions for the equality of women with men under Article 7 there are no specific guarantees for non-discrimination against women in Article 15.

vi) Shared decision-making

At the Fale-Kaupule (traditional village meeting), only male elders at the village participate in decision making. Decisions made at the Fale-Kaupule are passed on to the Kaupule for implementation. During the Fale-Kaupule, women are requested to give clarification on issues relating to women. During important traditional ceremonies, the *matai* (head of the clan) is the only person who can give special speeches; however, there are also occasions where women would be allowed to take part in speeches, dancing and singing. Women do not take part in the traditional decision-making processes; however, men often consult the advice of their wives at home; therefore, to some extent, women can influence decisions made at the Fale-Kaupule. (Simeona ?: pers. comm., November 2000).

There are quarterly assembly meetings held at the Fale-Kaupule, when anyone over the age of 18 is eligible to speak, and vote for a resolution; however, it depends on the traditional culture of each island (pers. comm. November 2000).

There are four women participating at the local government level. At the government's decision-making level, there are two women participating at the Council of Secretaries and another woman holding the position of the President in the Public Service Commission. At the middle management level in government, two women hold directorship posts. In addition, women are still under represented at board and committee meetings. During the last ten years; one woman was in politics for eight years; since then, there has been no woman in politics.

vii) Environment

Women are the major users of the resources. With the exception of Funafuti, more than 80 per cent of households depend on firewood for cooking, which women are largely responsible for collecting. They also rely on traditional trees for making handicrafts, medicines and other purposes. Women depend on reef resources for protein and for making handicrafts to earn income for the family. In Funafuti, plastics including plastic bags, disposable nappies, food wrappings, and drink bottles, are seen at nearshore environments. The import of such materials has made life easier for working mothers, particularly those in the urban areas. However, women increasingly use disposable plastics with no awareness of the side effects to health and the environment. Plastics, and the chemicals they contain or produce during their break down or burning:

- may contribute to breast cancer in women;
- may affect male fertility;
- may affect unborn children;

- increases greenhouse gases and the breakdown of the ozone layer.

viii) Culture and the family

Fighting, arguing, sexual promiscuity and drunkenness are considered socially unacceptable behaviours. Negative public opinion effectively helps prevent socially unacceptable behaviour. The fear of public criticism helps control the peace among Tuvaluans. The extended family remains the traditional way of supporting each member of the family, particularly the old people, and children whose parents have separated or passed away. Funafuti people who are working and have an income are obliged to meet financial requirements of relatives by allowing relatives from the islands to reside with them. This has contributed to unemployment and other social problems in the urban area. With the limited land space in Funafuti and the growing population, people will continue to put pressure on land and marine resources.

ix) Mechanisms to promote the advancement of women

The government's commitment towards the advancement of women dates back to the mid-1970s when the National Council of Women (NCW), a non-governmental organisation was established. Following the Beijing Plus Five, the Department of Women's Affairs was established in 1999 within the Ministry of Health, Women and Community Affairs, to work in partnership with NCW to promote the advancement of women. Further commitment by the government is reflected through the endorsement of the National Women's Policy and its Action Plan aimed at reinforcing 'the elimination of discriminatory legislation and practices by government departments and agencies that hinder women's ability to participate and benefit from development'. The major constraints include the lack of resources (personnel and funds) to undertake gender training, gender budget analysis, policy and sector analysis, and the compilation of gender disaggregated data for analytical purpose.

x) Violence

Feedback from police officers indicate, that in most cases, women reporting their husbands often drop the case, which, therefore does not reach the conviction stage. In 1998, there was one reported rape case. Violence against women in Tuvalu's cultural context is often considered a shame and reported cases would stigmatise the abuser as well as his immediate and extended family.

xi) Peace and culture

In Tuvalu, the Church plays an important role in maintaining peace. For example in Vaitupu and Nanumea, interviewees reported that the Church plays a peace-keeping role during family conflicts. Tuvalu (1995a) states that "the stability of Tuvaluan society and the happiness of the people of Tuvalu, both present and future, depend largely on the maintenance of Tuvaluan values, culture and tradition, including the vitality and the sense of identity of island communities and attitudes of island co-operation, self-help, and unity within and among those communities". In recognition of government support, a draft social and welfare policy for Tuvalu was prepared by the Department of Community Affairs. It has a mission statement to ensure 'that individual Tuvaluans live in a harmonious environment that encourages, improves and supports the cohesion of family, community, and nation within the global community'. Achievement of the vision would require considerable work and commitment from the government, donors and regional agencies to provide financial and technical support.

xii) Poverty

In the context of Tuvalu, poverty is defined differently in urban and rural areas. Although subsistence agriculture and fishing are accessible to everyone in the islands, there are alarming indicators of poverty related to food security, landlessness, and emerging squatter areas, which require policy measures to prevent impacts on women, family and the nation.

xiii) Indigenous people's rights

In the traditional custom, the eldest son obtains the biggest piece of land and the largest *pulaka* (giant taro) pit. However, the father observes his children to choose the best successor. The eldest son can lose this credibility if he has neglected his parents, which is usually the case among employed offspring who fail to send money to their parents. Occasionally, a daughter may be chosen to be the temporary heir before the fanauga agreed to the division of their land (Samuelu 1983). Traditionally, women are not entitled to own land, as they marry and depend on their husband's land. The intent is to maintain land titles under the father's name. In the event that women become neglected by their husbands, brothers are prepared to ensure that they have access to land resources. During marriage, women still have access to the resources but are subject to the brother's consent.

2. Recommendations.

The Pacific Women's Resource Bureau is encouraged to work closely with other concerned SPC programmes to assist the Department of Women's Affairs (DWA) in taking necessary actions to address critical issues affecting women in Tuvalu. Similarly, the DWA is encouraged to continue to work closely with various government departments, NGOs, and the community at the national level to mobilise the available skills and resources to improve the economic and social status of women and children. To ensure that women's issues in Tuvalu are addressed the following recommendation are suggested.

2.1 Health

- While the health and status of women in the community is of concern, the idea of 'Women's Health Check' needs to be promoted in order to get women into a routine of medical check ups, so that problems can be detected and treated early on. The exercise does not cost the government, and in the long term, there will be less female cases to be treated.

- Future records of the detailed causes of neonatal conditions is necessary to identify strategies for improving the situation.

- Sufficient budget allocation to improve health preventive measures will continue to improve the health of women, children and the nation.

- Appropriate non-formal training for women especially those who are not working and have limited education background, in basic health care and nutrition, and family planning is important. The involvement of men in family planning programmes is necessary.

- The increased consumption of imported foods affects self-sufficiency of food production and continues to widen the trade deficit. This will also lead to the decline in the production and consumption of local foods, which are high in nutritional value compared with imported foods. An integrated programme by concerned government departments and non-government organisations and interested groups should find strategies to promote subsistence production, and consumption of local foods.

- An integrated effort by the Ministry of Health, Education, TuFHA, Churches, youth groups, and interested community groups is encouraged to enhance reproductive health care.

- Future research is necessary to identify causes of illegitimate births by single mothers aged over 19. The data is useful for planners to identify strategies to reduce the number of illegitimate births. Knowing the background of single mothers and their partners is important for the development of strategies to address the problem.

2.2 Education and training (formal and non-formal education)

- External assistance from donors and regional agencies is required in order to address the training needs of disabled children, and reduce the burden of mothers. This is one area where government has not given much attention due to limited resources, although it is on the agenda for future development.

- Government efforts that contribute to high female participation in education need to be maintained

2.3 Economic empowerment

- Credit schemes are strongly recommended to provide financial assistance to unemployed men and women, with the know-how and management skills to operate businesses. Tuvalu Business Centre and Tuvalu Development Bank need to work closely together to assist potential entrepreneurs through management and financial assistance. Additional forms of securities need to be explored (e.g. National Profident Fund, Insurance, Savings), in order to access loans to potential clients. The Department of Women's Affairs needs to coordinate training attachments for women to acquire and share other countries successful experiences in micro-credit schemes.

2.4 Agriculture and fishing (formal and informal)

- An integrated effort by the Departments of Agriculture, Fisheries, Health, Women, and Environment, and NGOs and other interested groups should find strategies to promote subsistence production, and consumption of local foods. The traditional role of women in the home places them in a good position, to encourage family members consume local foods, which are high in nutritional value compared with imported foods. Reducing the dependency on imported foods not only provides good health for the nation, but makes a contribution to the improvement in the trade balance.

- Gender analysis is an important first step in understanding the different roles and needs of men and women. It is important for targeting training and other development programmes that capitalise on the contribution of men and women in development.

- A close working relationship between the Fisheries Department, Environment Unit, Department of Women and non-government bodies that work closely with women and communities in designing fisheries work programmes that will affect women and communities.

- Fisheries Department should increase the involvement of women in their work and consider their needs when planning and implementing development and management programmes for marine resources.

- Fisheries Department should improve training services for women in the fisheries sector.

- Both government and non-governmental organisations should improve information services and increase public awareness of fisheries and conservation issues for both men and women in the fisheries sector.

- The focus should remain on small-scale projects for village communities, especially those involving women.

2.5 Legal and human rights

- The Department of Women's Affairs needs to work on a proposal for submission to government, identifying specific areas of the legislation involving discrimination against women that need to be amended, and considered by the legislation review committee.

2.6 Shared decision making

- Gender training that targets community leaders, including decision makers at the Fale-Kaupule, will help them understand feasible projects that need the participation of women.

- Design of project proposals that would be beneficial to women and the family, need to be well coordinated and involve the consultation of male elders in villages in order to get their understanding and support when projects are discussed at the Fale-Kaupule.

- Leadership training for women will give them confidence to participate in different decision-making levels.

2.7 Environment

- Research on traditional conservation strategies should involve the participation of communities to develop local by-laws. Communities will then feel a greater sense of ownership of the resources and regulations. Women are the major users of marine resources, and their participation in the design of resource conservation strategies is essential.

- The Department of Women's Affairs is urgently required to liase with the Environment Unit to conduct national training workshops on sensitive environmental issues that women can get involved in.

2.8 Culture and the family

- It is strongly recommended that research, record and document oral traditions and traditional skills and practices be done. Traditional practices that are discriminatory to women will be identified. A national workshop inviting key stakeholders including traditional leaders can be arranged to raise awareness of the impact of such practices on women, and identify strategies to change them. Changing cultural practices can not happen overnight so public awareness can make a contribution to any improvement.

2.9 Mechanisms to promote the advancement of women

- The limited budget of government to finance feasible programme activities for gender equity and the advancement of women, thus requires submission of quality projects that would attract the interests of donors and development partners to provide financial and technical assistance. Institutional strengthening of staff of the Department of Women's Affairs is necessary to improve staff skills in research, and project planning and management. This will enhance their capacity to identify and design feasible projects. Women's Affairs also need to have the technical capacity to provide assistance to non-governmental organisations, particularly TANGO, who in turn provide assistance to women's groups in designing their projects.

2.9.1 Violence

- The Women's Department needs to liase with the police office, hospitals, community affairs and others to try to record all evidence of domestic violence against women. Emergency section in the hospital is another reliable source of relevant evidences. The records of such information is important for future policy measures to maintain the control of domestic violence against women.

2.9.2 Peace and culture

- A collaborative effort by Tuvalu Government, the private sector, NGOs (including church groups), donors and regional agencies is required to provide financial and technical assistance for the implementation of the Social and Welfare policy, in phases. The recurrent cost implication of the policy will be relatively high. However, government should try and explore means for generating revenue, to be able to meet the recurrent cost implication of implementing the policy.

2.9.3 Poverty

- Future socio-economic survey needs to take into account what per centage of the households with poor water and sanitation facilities. How many income earners living in each house? What would have motivated the unemployed people to go back and live in rural areas? Such information will help decision-makers design policy measures to reverse rural-urban migration and reduce population density on Funafuti.

2.9.4 Indigenous people's rights

- The traditional culture dictates that women are not entitled to own land. This may constrain their contribution to development. A number of women are involved in piggery and vegetable growing, which are some of the potential areas they can develop on a commercial basis to generate income for their families. Such development areas are not only beneficial for women and their families but for the economy as well. Government needs to provide appropriate means of support services to women to capitalise their contribution to development. For example, the development of a special credit scheme for women who can not obtain loans from Tuvalu Development Bank, because of the unavailability of land security and other collateral. Special criteria and conditions need to be established so women can be qualified to apply under the scheme. Skills and capacity to run a project could be considered as one criteria.

1. Introduction

1.1 Nature of the problem

The transition from a traditional-based exchange system to a cash economy (following the colonisation of the Pacific Islands), has introduced a number of challenges to Pacific women, including changes in gender roles and implications for the health status of women and the family. The Pacific Platform for Action (PPA), adopted in 1994 by the 22 member countries of the Pacific Community, formally accepts the importance of women's participation in national and regional development activities. The PPA contains thirteen critical areas of concern affecting women:

- health,
- education and training,
- economic empowerment,
- agriculture and fishing,
- legal and human rights,
- shared decision making,
- environment,
- culture and the family,
- mechanisms to promote the advancement of women,
- violence,
- peace and justice,
- poverty, and
- indigenous people's rights.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Community, through the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau (PWRB), is mandated to support the implementation of the PPA. The PWRB's goal is to 'contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the Pacific Island countries and territories by supporting national actions towards gender equity and the advancement of women'. It plays an important role in the delivery of the Secretariat's technical services to island member countries, including Tuvalu, in the areas of training and community education, monitoring and evaluation, and information and communication. Between 16 and 30 November 2000, a baseline study on women's issues in Tuvalu covering the thirteen critical areas, was conducted.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the baseline study were to:

- assess women's issues in the thirteen areas of concern in the PPA, and
- identify policy and planning implications for the improvement of women, children and the nation.

1.3 Methodology

Relevant books and data from SPC Demography, Statistics, and Health programmes and the SPC Library have been read to identify the important gender issues requiring necessary action by Tuvalu Government, regional agencies (e.g. SPC) and NGOs.

The study was undertaken with the participation of staff from the Tuvalu Department of Women's Affairs with the view to transfer skills to the local staff, in the area of gender and development. Relevant stakeholders from government departments, private enterprises, NGOs, and women and men at community levels were consulted to learn their experiences in women issues, and identify recommendations for future planning towards gender equity and the advancement of women in Tuvalu.

2. Overview

Tuvalu (formerly the Ellice Islands) gained independence in 1978, following separation from Kiribati (formerly the Gilbert Islands). It is comprised of nine islands, located in the central Pacific, between 5 and 11 degrees south latitude and 176 and 150 degrees east longitude. The islands are coral atolls that are about 4.5 metres above sea level. Rains fall almost throughout the year with high humidity and sunny periods on most days. The mean annual rainfall ranges from 2583 mm on Nanumanga, to 3609 mm on Funafuti. The total land area is around 26 square kilometres and is composed of rock, coral and sand with no surface water and no forest vegetation. The total population in 1997 was estimated at 10,900, with about 42 per cent living in Funafuti, and 58 per cent in rural areas (SPC 1998).

The government's vision for 2015 focuses on performance in the areas of good governance and commerce, the private sector and the public sector reform, health and education, values and spirituality, peace and harmony, and unity in diversity (Tuvalu 1998c). The major challenge is to put the vision into action, which requires allocation of a greater proportion of resources to programme activities. Capital construction contributes significantly to the increase in the 2000 budget. Recently, the government invested in the improvement of shipping services and roads on Funafuti. In addition, development activities have involved the renovation of Motufoua secondary school, Funafuti primary school, and Nukufetau primary school. Such developments have contributed to the increase in the 2000 budget.

The 1997 Fale-Kaupule Act marked the government's commitment to decentralise the responsibilities to the island community leaders to run their internal affairs, and support the development of the outer islands. Tuvalu government places emphasis on the proper training of executive staff before they take full responsibility of implementing the Act. Over 40 per cent of the income from the Special Development Funds is allocated for outer island development. Among the major outer island developments are the construction of community fishing centres on Nanumanga, Nui, Niutao and Nukulaelae Islands.

The gross domestic product per capita was valued at A$2067 in 1998, an increase of 16 per cent from 1997. Government services (23 per cent) followed by agriculture and fisheries (17 per cent) contribute significantly to the gross domestic product.

Employment opportunities are limited, with the formal cash sector providing jobs to about 32 per cent of the productive population within the 15 to 54 age group. Small-scale businesses account for 30 per cent of the total formal cash employment. Despite the important contribution of the private sector to cash employment, there are constraints impeding its development. In support of

private sector development, the government allocated A$500,000 for small-scale business development. Such funds will be channelled through the Ministry of Trade, Commerce and Tourism and the Development Bank of Tuvalu to develop small commercial business start-ups rather than capital intensive enterprises (Tuvalu 1998c).

Tuvalu's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) encompasses 900,000 square kilometres. Most of the marine resources within the EEZ are under-utilised, but have the potential for development if there is investment capital (finance), management and technical skills, technology, and appropriate economic infrastructure. Small-scale artisanal fishermen have been successful in supplying fish to the domestic market.

3. Pacific Platform for Action gender indicators

3.1 Health

The health of children depends very much on the health of women who need several key things:

- food security,
- adequate potable water,
- sanitation,
- shelter, and a
- supportive network.

Changes in gender roles, as a result of social and economic development, have an impact on the health status of women. Women need to be given economic and social services, including clean water, health care and family planning education and services, and functional literacy to help them provide the best care for their family's basic needs. The general health status of women in Tuvalu is poor as reflected in the following health indicators; however some improvements have been made, but continued support services are required.

3.1.1 Infant mortality rate

The infant mortality rate (IMR) has generally improved over the period 1991 to 1997, with 37 per 1000 live births in 1991 and 26 per 1000 live births in 1998. The current rate is the second highest in the Polynesian countries, but relatively low compared with other Pacific Island countries in Melanesia and Micronesia.

Respiratory infections and diarrhoeal diseases are the major cause of morbidity in children. Respiratory infections accounted for more than 50 per cent of diseases in children under five years of age in 1989 (Tuvalu 1996). Reported cases of acute respiratory infections among children less than 11 months old increased from 140 in 1996 to 251 in 1999. Similarly, reported cases of diarrhoeal diseases among the same age group, also increased from 81 to 252 between 1996 and 1999. Efforts to improve the services at the antenatal, birth and post-natal periods are underway. Attendance of health staff at births and adequate follow-up care in early childhood are being addressed at all levels (Tuvalu 1996).

There have been no studies conducted on breastfeeding but observations suggest that most babies are breastfed when they are born. Bottle-feeding is common among working mothers, particularly in the urban area. A high number of bottle-fed babies have been admitted to the hospital at least once for diarrhoea.

An interviewee (68-year-old woman) said that a number of mothers in the urban area increasingly depend on bottle-feeding and imported baby food. With the multiple roles of mothers, there are possibilities of risks that may result in diarrhoea and other diseases. Young coconuts, mashed breadfruit and other local foods that are of high nutritional value for children are considered low status. The interviewee added that her seven children had been breastfed and supplemented with toddy, and fed local foods. In the opinion of the interviewee, her children were healthy because of local foods while her grand children are sickly because of imported foods. However, proper cleaning of bottles and introduction of food to children at the right time, normally between four and six months, to complement breastfeeding will make children healthy. The improvement in infant mortality (see table 10) reflects general improvement in health services and the health care of mothers.

Table 1: Reported cases of children with diarrhoea, respiratory infections and measles

	1996	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**
ARI				
0-11 months	140	154	112	251
0-4 years	440	556	371	344
5 and over	1053	1041	371	640
Total	1633	1751	854	1235
Diarrhoea				
0-11 months	81	68	105	252
0-4 years	422	556	389	294
	503	624	494	546
5 and over	842	1041	900	686
Total	1848	2289	1888	1778
Measles				
0-11 months	0	0	29	0
0-4 years	7	3	85	0
5 and over	20	10	317	4
Total	27	13	431	4

Source: Health Statistics database, Ministry of Health, Women and Community Affairs, Tuvalu.

3.1.2 Access to water and sanitation

Water supply and sanitation have been improved on the outer islands with the assistance of United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) projects (Tuvalu 1996). Rainwater cisterns, water tanks and communal taps are the major sources of drinking water in Tuvalu. The 1991 population census showed that on average, 72 per cent of households on all the outer islands have access to a water tank (table 2). A significant proportion of households on the outer islands have access to a rainwater cistern, but this varies greatly according to each island. A numbers of households on all islands have access to a communal tank, ranging from 3.3 per cent of households on Nukulaelae to 17.2 per cent on Nui. Water from communal tanks is rationed, so that households will equally have a share. Although a larger amount of water is allocated to households with small children, it was reported that this amount is still insufficient to meet basic household needs for cooking, washing and drinking. On Funafuti (urban area), 55.5 per cent of households have access to a water tank; 37 per cent to a rainwater cistern; 5.7 per cent to a communal tap; and 1.7 per cent to other sources. Compared to 1991, the 1994 household income and expenditure survey showed a six per cent increase in households with access to water tanks and a three percentage drop in households with access to communal taps, implying government achievement in encouraging families to have their own water supply (see table 3).

Between 1991 and 1994, there were some improvement in the availability of toilet facilities to households (see table 4). However, in table 1, the number of children less than 11 months old with diarrhoea is reported to have increased between 1996 and 1999, implying the need for continued improvement in water and sanitation facilities and other related areas.

Government encourages families to have their own water supply to lessen reliance on communal water tanks.

Table 2: Per cent of outer island households with a main drinking water source

	Water Source			
Island	**Rainwater cistern**	**Tank**	**Communal tap**	**Other**
Nanumea	5.2	82.6	9.7	1.9
Nanumaga	10.2	84.7	4.5	0.6
Niutao	13.7	81.3	4.3	-
Nui	6.9	74.1	17.2	0.9
Vaitupu	14.9	72.2	9.3	3.6
Nukfetau	10.6	73.2	12	4.2
Funatuti	37.1	55.5	5.7	1.7
Nukulaelae	5	91.7	3.3	-
Niulakita	80	20	-	-

Source: Tuvalu, 1991b. 1991 Population and housing census volume 2: analytical report.

Table 3: Per cent of households with drinking water sources

	Water sources				
	Direct supply from cistern/tank	**Outside tank**	**Communal tap**	**Other**	**Not recorded**
Funafuti	30.2	62.6	3.6	3.6	0
Vaitupu	11.4	84.1	0	4.5	0
Other surveyed islands	0.7	87.8	6.1	2	3.4

Source: Tuvalu, 1998. Household income and expenditure survey 1994.

Table 4: Percent of households (by island) with some type of toilet facility

Types of toilet facilities				
Period		**1991**		
Islands	**Flush**	**Water Seal**	**Reef Latrine**	**None**
Nanumea	0.6	65.8	18.7	14.8
Nanumaga	1.9	82.2	10.2	5.7
Niutao	2.9	85.6	2.2	7.9
Nui	2.6	65.5	14.7	16.4
Vaitupu	12.9	55.7	0.5	30.9
Nukufetau	2.1	71.8	3.5	22.5
Funafuti	46.6	37.1	6.5	9.7
Nukulaelae	13.3	78.3	5	3.3
Niulakita	-	33.3	-	66.7
Period		**1994**		
Islands	**Flush**	**Water Seal**	**Reef latrine**	**Other**
Funafuti	54.7	38.8	3.6	2.9
Vaitupu	22.7	40.9	25	11.4
Other surveyed islands	0.7	71.6	27.7	0

Source: Tuvalu,1991b. 1991 Population and housing census volume 2: analytical report.
Tuvalu, 1998. Household income and expenditure survey 1994.

3.1.3 Women's health

The health of women has been affected by increased hours of work and by reduced availability of food and healthcare facilities. Less healthy women are less efficient and this reduces their productivity in each of their roles, thereby diminishing national income and national welfare (Commonwealth Secretariat 1989).

The health of women in Tuvalu is affected by their reproductive role. Diseases of the reproductive system and complications from birth or pregnancy are common. According to the 1993 health annual report, four children died from still birth and three from intra uterine death. One woman died from post-partum hoemorrhage (see table 5). In Tuvalu, women spend most of their time in income-generating activities, community commitment and food preparation for feasts, while men mainly provide food. Table 19 shows that more women than men spend 17 to 40 hours in marketing and subsistence activities. Health services are available for antenatal care and trained

attendants at birth; however, problems still arise during emergencies due to the dispersed nature of the islands, and poor transportation and communication systems. Iron deficiency anaemia and parasitic infections, especially hookworms, contribute to complications during pregnancy, which often lead to low birth weight, prenatal deaths and pre-maturity. Other related reproductive diseases of concern include sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and cancer of the cervix and breast. However, reported cases are low because many women do not openly discuss these diseases during a medical check up (Tuvalu 1996).

One interviewee, whose husband used to work as a seafarer, explained how hard it is to be on her own, employed in cash work, and looking after the children, without the help of her relatives. To fulfil such functions, she sometimes gets up very early in the morning to do her housework before leaving for work. She misses out on a lot of the community activities as there is no one to look after the children. In addition, the pressure from her husband's family causes her yet more stress. While the husband is back with her, she feels a big weight is taken off her shoulders. He does most of the housebold chores while she goes to work. In addition, the husband is very productive; fishing, collecting coconuts and gardening, and the family has more access to fresh local food. The interviewee strongly suggested that working as a seafarer is mostly appropriate for single men'.

Among non-communicable diseases, arthritis/gout, diabetes, and hypertension are high in Tuvalu. It was also reported that cases of hypertension and diabetes are much higher among women than men, which could be related to obesity and lack of fitness among females. In connection to this problem, it has been observed that the consumption patterns of the population in the urban area has changed in recent years with traditional foods (coconut, pulaka, breadfruit and fish) being neglected and a higher dependence on imported foods such as rice, sugar, chicken and tinned food stuffs.

Table 5: Major causes of death in Tuvalu

Children < 1 yr	Number of cases	
	Male	Female
fever	1	
epileptic fits		1
blood disorder	1	
asphyxia	1	
respiratory failure	2	
dehydrated	1	
diarrhoea		1
severe bleeding	1	
stillbirth	3	1
intra uterine death (IUD)		3
jaundice	1	
Total	**11**	**6**

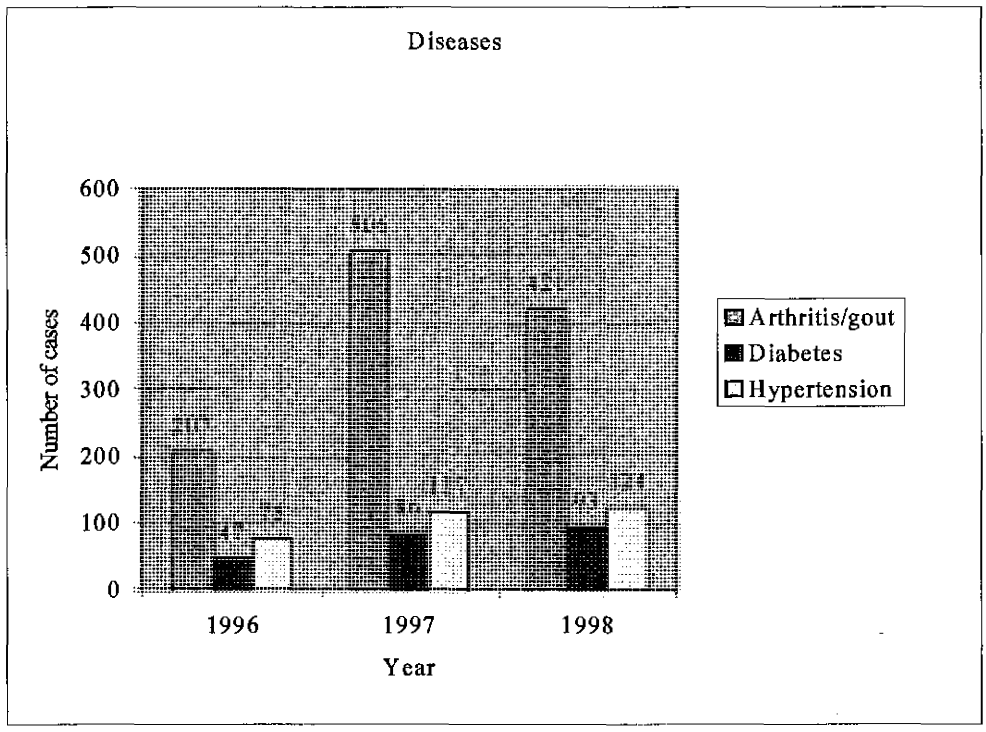
Children 1 - 4 yrs	Number of cases	
	Male	Female
severe malnutrition		1
drown		1
Total		2

Children 5 - 14		
	Male	Female
fever	1	
bronchitis		1
Total	**1**	**1**

15 to 65+ yrs	Number of cases	
	Male	Female
severe anaemia	1	
fever	2	1
old age	3	6
bronchitis	1	
cardiovascular accidents (CVA)	1	3
stroke		1
heart disease	2	
heamopotisis	1	
cellulitis		2
pulmonary tuberculosis (PTB)	2	
asthmatic attack		1
unknown	9	5
cardiac arrest		6
dehydrated		2
cancer	3	
diabetic		2
peptic ulcer	1	2
pneumonia	2	
peritonitis	1	
duodenal ulcer		1
TB & other forms		1
cardiopulmonary failure	1	1
cerebrovascular haemo	1	
cardiorespiratory failure		1
congestive heart failure	1	
Post-partum hoemorrhage (PPH) & shock		1
glomerulonepheritis		1
brain injury	1	
meningitis	1	
enlarged liver	1	
Total	**35**	**37**

Source: Tuvalu 1993. Health Division Annual Report 1993.

Figure 1: Non-communicable disease 1996 to 1998



Source: Health Statistics database, Ministry of Health, Women and Community Affairs, Tuvalu.

3.1.4 Tuberculosis

Between 1998 and 1999, there were a total of 31 new cases registered with the reported average notification rate of 150/100,000 for pulmonary positive cases. It was further reported that the tuberculosis information system is poor for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the control programme. Of the 13 cases reported in 1999, two were documented defaulters (fail to complete treatment) and it was also not clear how many of the other 11 cases received strict supervision of their treatment (O'Conner 1999). A rate of 150/100,000 means that for 10,000 people in Tuvalu, 15 have tuberculosis.

3.1.5 Fertility

Education and cash work influence women's fertility. The overall mean parity of women aged 15 to 49 years was 1.4 children for women who participate in the cash work force, and 1.7 children for women who do housework and subsistence work. Similarly, the overall mean parity was 1.7 children for women with primary education and 1.6 children for women with secondary and higher education (table 6). Compared with other Pacific Island countries, Tuvalu has relatively low total fertility rate (average number of children born during a woman's lifetime) of 3.4.

Teenage pregnancy is relatively low compared with other Pacific Island countries, however, it is still important that continued efforts are taken to control the numbers. (See http://www.spc.int/demog/pop_data2000.html). Between 1994 and 1998, live births by married and single mothers aged 15 to 19 were high in Funafuti, and two cases from two of the outer islands. Out of 49 live births, 11 were births to single mothers (table 7). There is fear that more young people in the urban area are at risk of STDs and HIV/AIDS and the dangers of long-term reproductive health problems.

The number of live births by non-married mothers aged 15 to 49 in Tuvalu is relatively high (table 8). Between 1994 and 1998, total illegitimate births accounted for 10 per cent of the total live births (table 9). The majority of illegitimate births is among single mothers aged 20 to 49.

Table 6: Mean parity for women aged 15 to 49

Work status	**Mean parity**
Wages/salaries	1.4
House work	1.7
Subsistence	1.7
Education satus	
Primary	1.7
Secondary or higher	1.6

Source: Tuvalu,1991b. 1991 Population and housing census volume 2: analytical report.

Table 7: Number of live births per mothers aged 15 to 19, married and unmarried 1994-1998

Islands	1994		1995		1996		1997		1998	
	Married	Single	Married	Single	Married	Single	Married	Single	Married	Single
Nanumea	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Nanumaga	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Niutao	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nui	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vaitupu	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Nukufetau	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Funafuti	9	3	5	1	5	1	8	2	10	1
Nukulaelae	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Niulakita	0	0	0	0	0	0			0	0
Total	10	3	5	1	5	1	8	3	10	3

Source: Health Statistics database, Ministry of Health, Women and Community Affairs, Tuvalu.

Table 8: Number of births by single mothers aged 15 to 49, 1994 to 1998

Islands	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Nanumea	1	1	2	1	3
Nanumaga	0	0	0	1	0
Niutao	2	1	2	1	0
Nui	0	1	1	0	0
Vaitupu	4	2	3	5	3
Nukufetau	3	7	1	0	0
Funafuti	21	11	16	13	10
Nukulaelae	0	0	1	0	0
Niulakita	0	0	0	0	0
Total	31	23	26	21	16

Source: Health Statistics database, Ministry of Health, Women and Affairs, Tuvalu.

Table 9: Proportion of illegitimate births to total births, 1994 to 1998

Year	Total births	Aged 15 to 19	Aged 20 to 49	Illegitimate divided by total births
1994	251	3	28	12.4
1995	241	1	22	9.5
1996	245	1	25	10.6
1997	230	3	19	9.6
1998	231	3	15	7.8

Source: Health Statistics database, Ministry of Health, Women and Community Affairs, Tuvalu

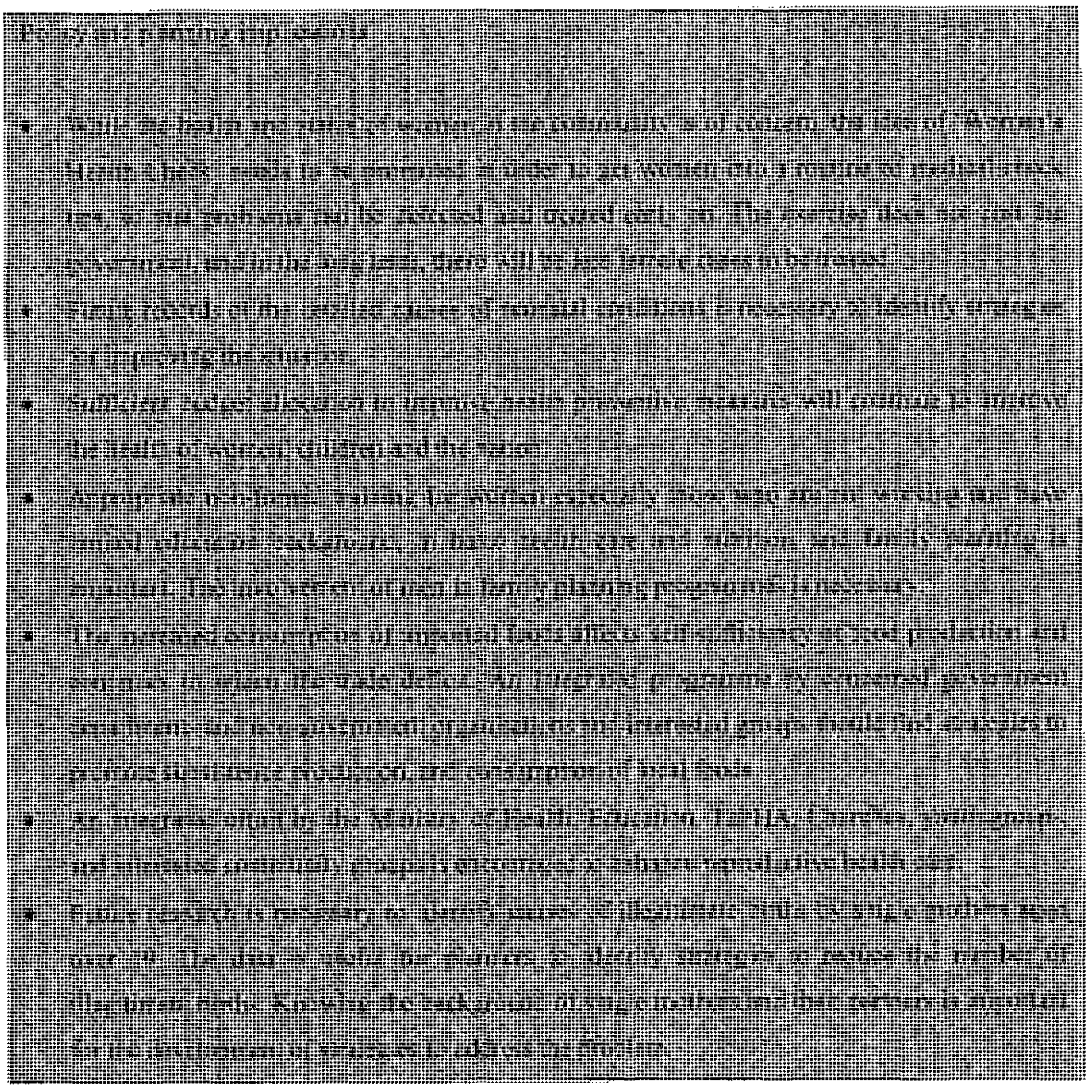
3.1.6 Family planning

Tuvalu Family Health Association (TuFHA) was established in 1989 as a non-governmental organisation providing services to communities, mainly youth, in the areas of family planning and reproductive sexual health, pregnancies, drug abuse, STDs and HIV/AIDS and delinquency. It receives funding assistance from International Planned Parenthood Federation, and the Tuvalu Government. Although such issues are not acute in Tuvalu, preventive measures are essential. Because men have negative attitudes towards family planning issues a number of women consult TuFHA without their husband's consent. To prevent long-term problems among families, the organisation recently held a workshop targeting men, resulting in positive feedback and better understanding. With the limited available resources, the organisation tries to extend its services to marginalised populations by making visits to homes. With the dispersed nature of islands, poor transportation and communication, and limited resources, TuFHA faces challenges in extending services. In its current strategic plan, the organisation has drafted two project proposals to acquire a mobile clinic and implement drama programme to promote health to communities.

Table 10: Health indicators.

	Years							
Health indicators	**1991**	**1992**	**1993**	**1994**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**
Population	9043	9213	9367	9544	9696	9865	9995	-
Crude birth rate	29.7	29	27.3	27.8	26.7	24.8	23	
Crude death rate	9.4	11.2	10.4	8.2	9.8	7.7	10	-
Live birth	269	262	247	251	241	245	230	-
Death	85	101	94	74	89	76	100	-
Infant mortality rate	37.2	34.4	40.5	16	49.8	36.7	26.1	-
Family planning coverage	44.3	50.2	51.5	38.3	40.5	36.9	41.2	-
Family planning current users								
Eugynon	110	119	110	70	76	62	55	59
Microgynon	81	116	142	108	126	153	143	195
Copper T	47	51	44	25	20	19	21	21
Lippes loop	170	145	135	106	77	67	58	53
Depo-provera	331	409	416	270	277	345	339	354
Condom	49	53	59	39	43	39	34	39
Ovulation	84	104	122	80	81	69	66	78
Sterilisation	164	178	177	198	197	187	191	191
Norplant	0	0	0	0	45	41	35	35
Microlut	0	0	0	0	6	16	21	22

Source: Health Statistics database, Ministry of Health, Women and Community Affairs, Tuvalu.



3.2 Education and training (formal and non-formal)

Awards of scholarships are based on merit, irrespective of gender; except donor-funded scholarships, which have conditions for gender equity. The formation of the Ministry of Education and Culture marked the commitment of government towards education without neglecting the cultural identity of its citizens. The literacy rate of men in the urban area is slightly the same with the literacy rate of women, but relatively lower in the rural area. Female participation at all levels of education is relatively high. In 1998, there were 27 women and 31 men obtained pre-service scholarships. Between 1998 and 2000, of the total pre-service scholars, 102 were females and 88 were males, according to the records at the education office, reflecting the improvement in the participation of women in higher education. Among USP extension students enrolled in 1998 and 1999, there were more women than men taking courses. There is relatively low female

participation in the area of in-service training with 26 females and 65 males according to August 2000 records.

The 1998 records show that women take up studies in the areas of management, accounting, economics, environment, education, stenography, and primary teaching, with the majority taking accounting and primary teaching. Men take up studies in the areas of management, law, marine and electrical engineering, business studies, computing, economics, environment, fisheries, agriculture, land management and surveying, resource management, education, and technology.

The increased participation of women in higher education is partly the result of parents who realise that investment in female education generates economic and social benefits to families (Teualeala Manuella, pers. comm. November 2000).

The evidence of increased participation by females in education has disproved some of the myths that have been claimed to be the impediment to women's education. According to the Tuvalu Beijing Plus Five country report, gender disparity and the prevailing belief that women's place is in the home are factors that are believed to have discouraged most women from participating in education. Even though western influences are constantly influencing traditional ways of living, most women feel there is a lack of relevance in education. Women see the present education system in Tuvalu as focusing only towards preparing individuals for an urban white collar job, which is not a reality for most of girls and boys. This could perhaps be true as there are not enough current employment opportunities in Tuvalu. The development of the private sector and non-formal education is essential for catering to the needs of school drop-outs, and school leavers who are unable to find jobs in the formal sector. The current formal employment caters to about 32 per cent of the productive population (aged 15 to 54). Most schools do not prepare students for self-employment and other productive activities in the subsistence sector. However, such constraints do not appear to have discouraged the participation of women in higher education.

However, there are other issues that have been reported by government staff, which remain the challenge of the present government. A number of training workshops designed for mothers are ineffective as women often do not have the time to attend. Instead, grandmothers often represent them.

The total expenditure of A$6,795,018 was estimated for the education sector in 2000, of which, 24 per cent was allocated to Tuvalu Maritime School. The Tuvalu Maritime School on Amatuku Island, which opened in 1979, provides training and employment opportunities for men to work on overseas vessels. Although opportunities for women are open, it is not a culturally appropriate field of employment for them. In November 1998, almost 50 Tuvaluan seafarers were recruited for

overseas employment, and another 43 were ready in December of the same year, with no similar vocational schools for women (Lambeth 2000). It is estimated that A$4.8 million a year in remittances is earned by seafarers.

The owner of the Poltec Commercial School, also the Board Director of the Tuvalu Development Bank, runs a vocational school in computing, book keeping, clerical work and office management for young people. The duration of the courses is three months, targeting both working people and teenagers who have just completed their secondary schools. The courses are available during days and nights. Two courses have finished: 15 women graduated in July, 2000, and a second group 39 (with two males), graduated in October 2000. The current course has 14 students (3 males and 11 females). Both the government and private enterprises recognise the quality service of the school. It was reported that most graduates have secured jobs in different offices such as banks, finance, and telecommunications.

The signing of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1995? reflects the government's commitment to children's right to education. During the last four years, the Ministry of Education implemented a national training programme, encouraging the participation of parents to learn the importance of parents' support to the education of children. Positive feedback about the training programme has been received from communities.

The training of disabled children is one area where government has not given much attention due to limited resources, although it is on the agenda for future development. The Red Cross is the only non-governmental organisation that looks into the needs of disabled children; however financial resources are required to effectively implement a programme.

A consultative effort by the Departments of Women, Health and Community Affairs currently implements training programmes on parenthood, breastfeeding, IEC reproductive health, and home improvement to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life.

Table 11: Per centage of literate Tuvaluans, aged 10 and above.

	Urban				Rural			
	literate		illiterate		literate		iliterate	
Age group	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
10-14	174	187	3	6	214	189	3	3
15-19	131	100	2	2	169	180	1	3
20-24	214	141	3	1	129	199	1	4
25-29	183	170	2	2	184	250	1	0
30-34	153	189	1	2	160	221	0	2
35-39	109	134	0	1	131	219	1	2
40-44	99	97	2	0	101	162	3	1
45-49	49	68	3	0	86	127	1	2
50-54	57	58	0	0	93	134	0	1
55-59	35	66	0	1	90	121	1	0
60-64	39	46	0	0	93	102	0	1
65-69	44	33	0	0	81	99	0	2
70-74	18	24	0	1	44	64	1	1
75+	8	13	1	0	24	65	0	4
Total	1313	1326	17	16	1599	2132	13	26
Literacy rate	0.20	0.20			0.241	0.32		
Iliteracy rate			0.003	0.002			0.002	0.004

Source: Tuvalu, 1991a. 1991 Population and housing census, volume 1: basic information

SPC. 1998. Tuvalu population profile.

Table 12: Numbers of pre-service scholarships awarded in 1998

	1998	
Awards	**Female**	**Male**
Certificate in primary teaching	9	
Bachelors in education (home economics)	2	
Diploma in building technology		1
Bachelors in education (accounting)	2	
Diploma in stenography	4	
Primary care practitioners/MBBS		3
Bachelors in international trade and marketing	1	
Basic nursing	3	
Bachelors in demography		2
Diploma in automotive engineering		2
Deck cadetship		6
Diploma in electrical engineering		1
Diploma in town planning		1
Marine engineering cadetship		5
Diploma in radiology		1
Bachelors in education (chemistry)		1
Certificate in electrical engineering	1	
Diploma in tropical fisheries	1	
Diploma in plumbing		1
Bachelors in education (technology)		1
Bachelors in tourism	1	
Diploma in youth development	1	
Bachelors in business studies		1
Certificate in refrigeration		1
Bachelors in education (biology)		1
Diploma in aquaculture	1	
Diploma in lands surveying	1	
Diploma in accounting		1
Trade certificate in fitting machining		1
Pilot		1
Total	**27**	**31**

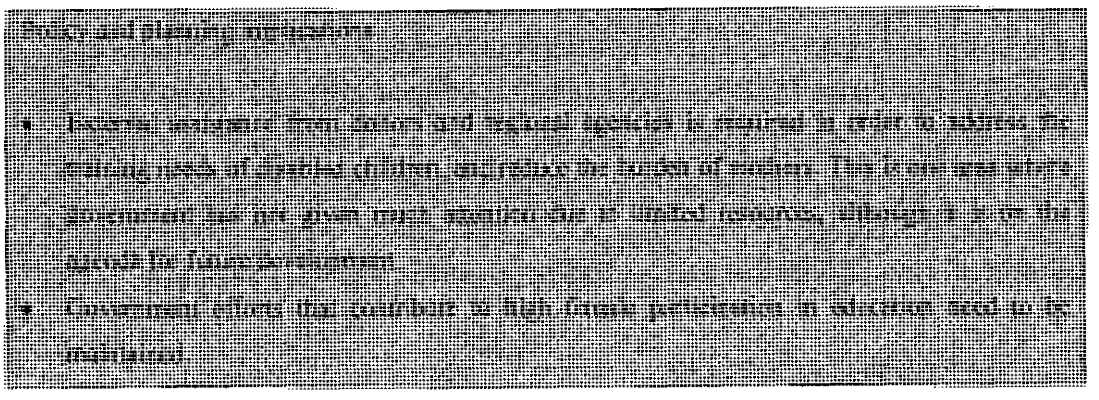
Source: Department of Women's Affairs database, Tuvalu.

Table 13: Total enrolment at USP Extension Centre

	1999		1998	
		Semester 1		
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
Preliminary	28	30		
Foundation	37	37		
Vocational	8	18		
Degree	67	59		
Total	**140**	**144**	**60**	**78**
		Semester 2		
Preliminary	21	20		
Foundation	45	34		
Vocational	4	6		
Degree	38	53		
Total	**108**	**113**	**97**	**122**

Note: There is no breakdown of total enrolment by programmes

Source: USP. 1998. University extension annual report 1998; USP. 1999. University extension annual report 1999.



3.3 Economic empowerment

The increased participation of women in education has led to the growing demand for their services in the labour force. In 1973, there were 73 women employed in the cash sector compared with 505 in 1991 (see table 14). The number of women employed in the formal sector has increased between 1979 and 1991, particularly in the areas of professional and technical jobs, clerical, sales and service work. Within the professional and technical area, the majority of women are primary school teachers and nurses (which relate to the traditional roles of women in Tuvaluan society) (see table 15). The majority of women engaged in administrative positions are in the 30 to 44 age group compared with men, the majority of whom are 45 years and over. Most professional women are between the ages of 15 and 44, compared with professional men aged 15 and over 45 (see table 16). Young women are gradually moving into positions predominantly occupied by men.

The remaining population was engaged in subsistence activities and sales of goods, with women being largely responsible for housework involving the processing of fish and toddy, and collecting firewood (see table 17 and table 18). There are few training activities and little information available on economic opportunities for women to undertake any kind of business ventures, though the current major ones are in the areas of guest house management, handicraft development and food processing for marketing (Tuvalu 2000a). Women devote most of their time to marketing and subsistence activities (see table 19), with handicraft being the major source of their income. Between 1981 and 1991, the total value of handicrafts sold in both the domestic and overseas market grew from A$5097 to A$69,331, reflecting a significant contribution by women to the economy (see table 20). In table 21, it shows that women devote much of their time to marketing; however, table 21 shows that most men in rural areas earn income from marketing, implying that men are in control of the cash. A similar problem happens in most Pacific Island countries, where women do the work such as marketing fish, seaweed farming, and the men keep the money. This may create problems among families when the men drink a lot of alcohol.

3.3.1 Women in business association

The women in business association was registered in 1997 under the umbrella of Tuvalu Association of Non-Government Organisations (TANGO). Initially, there were seven female members, but now the association has grown to 40 female members, with a committee of three members including the president, secretary and treasurer. Members meet on a monthly basis or other times as required to discuss and exchange ideas to support each other in improving

businesses. One of the members has successfully accumulated capital for home improvement based on income generated from informal activities. The training on how 'to improve your business' was organised by the association with the cost shared among members and services provided by the Tuvalu Business Centre. Another training, 'start your business', is in the pipeline. A trip to New Zealand in early 2001, to expose women to other business opportunities, will be attended by 12 members with a donation of A$10,000 from the Canada Fund, and the rest of the costs to be borne by each member.

Initial capital of A$2000 from Lottery Club of Australia was obtained and has now revolved through lending to members on business related activities, at a minimum interest rate of three per cent, and a grace period of three months. Qualified applicants for the funds must be a member, regularly attend the association activities and be proven free of debt. A member can initially apply for a maximum of A$200, and based on her performance report, can apply for an extension or new project for the maximum of A$400. Expansion of the credit scheme is essential for women who require initial capital to start a small business in support of the welfare of the family.

Figure 2 shows that men have much higher weekly income than women from business activities, implying the need to support more women in business.

Tuvalu Development Bank (TDB) stopped giving loans to the public in 1998, and has now concentrated on recovering outstanding loans. Based on the lending portfolio as of 31 December 2000, the total outstanding value of loans to men was A$1,043,688 compared with A$388,302 to women (see table 22). The figure for outstanding loans to women could be distorted as a number of loans belonging to employed men are being registered under their wives names in compliance with the national condition of service. According to TDB, the major problem affecting the performance of loans is poor management. It is suggested that in future a certificate proving the management skills of clients would be one of the conditions to loan approval. While loans are accessible to both unemployed men and women, the traditional culture does not allow women to own land, which is an important form of loan security. In addition, the National Bank of Tuvalu, the only commercial bank, lends out money only to employed men and women, and those with a regular source of income. About 70 to 80 per cent of those doing housework are women, implying that the majority of people without income are women who would obviously require financial assistance through credit schemes and targeted training to capitalise their contribution to development. Chamber of Commerce also stressed the need of financial assistance for the development of the private sector. Tuvalu Business Centre expressed the need for a close working relationship with Tuvalu Development Bank for business management training to potential bank clients. According to National Provident Fund employment current records, the private sector has contributed significantly to employment by hiring 579 men and 198 women.

Table 14: Trends in labour force

	Cash sector		Population 15 +	
Year	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
1973	368	73	1524	2027
1979	671	231	2133	2810
1991	883	505	2548	3115

Source: Tuvalu 1991a. 1991 Population and housing census volume 1: basic information; Tuvalu 1991b. 1991 Population and housing census volume 2: analytical report

Table 15: Employment of Tuvaluans aged 15 and over in the formal cash sector.

	1991				1979			
	Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural	
Sector	**% Male**	**% Female**	**% Male**	**% Female**	**% Male**	**% Female**	**% Male**	**% Female**
Professional and Technical	61	39	48	52	63	37	46	54
Administrative & managerial	82	18	88	12	84	16	100	0
Clerical and related	34	66	24	76	48	52	80	20
Sales	41	59	56	44	43	57	58	42
Service	55	45	74	26	56	44	71	29
Agriculture & fisheries	93	7	83	17	100	0	96	4
Production	87	13	74	26	100	0	100	0

Source: Tuvalu 1991a. 1991 Population and housing census volume 1: basic information; Tuvalu 1980. A report on the results of the census of the population of Tuvalu 1979.

Table 16: Gender and occupation of Tuvaluans aged 15 years and over

	Distribution by age group (%)					
	Male			Female		
Age group	**15-29**	**30-44**	**45+**	**15-29**	**30-44**	**45+**
Professional & technical	31.8	41.2	27.1	45.9	47.9	6.2
Administrative & managerial	6.2	45.7	48.1	37.5	50	12.5
Clerical & supervisory	44.6	43.4	12	61.8	36.2	2
Sales	38.6	43.9	17.5	62.5	32.8	4.7
Service	29.4	40	30.6	30.4	58.9	10.7
Agriculture & fishing	19.4	55.6	25	45.5	36.4	18.1
Production & labour	44.4	37.3	18.3	27.7	41.5	30.8

Source: Tuvalu 1991a. 1991 Population and housing census volume 1: basic information.

Table 17: Resident Tuvaluans aged 15 years and over by activity and gender

	Urban				Rural			
	Male	**Female**	**% Male**	**% Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**% Male**	**% Female**
Wages & salary	600	344	63.6	36.4	283	161	63.7	36.3
Sale of goods	14	21	40.0	60.0	46	46	50.0	50.0
Subsistence	75	31	70.8	29.2	587	175	77.0	23.0
Housework	290	661	30.5	69.5	339	1382	19.7	80.3
Student	75	25	75.0	25.0	59	71	45.4	54.6
Old	32	53	37.6	62.4	54	112	32.5	67.5
Others	67	14	82.7	17.3	27	19	58.7	41.3

Source: Tuvalu 1991b. 1991 Population and housing census volume 2: analytical report

Table 18: Men and women's participation in housework

	Urban		Rural	
Types of work	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
Processing toddy	96	282	200	1058
Dry/salting fish	61	252	180	976
Collecting firewood	342	371	806	1348
Total	**499**	**905**	**1186**	**3382**

Source: Tuvalu 1991a. 1991 Population and housing census volume 1: basic information

Table 19: Residents aged 15 years and over by numbers of hours spent working in one week and by type of economic activity

	Wages/profit				Marketing				Subsistence		
Hours spent	**Male**	**% Male**	**Female**	**% Female**	**Male**	**% Male**	**Female**	**% Female**	**Male**	**% Male**	**Female**
1 - 4	87	9	86	16	208	46	449	60	1121	53	1411
5 - 8	101	11	86	16	118	26	117	16	519	25	604
9 - 16	83	9	44	8	98	21	135	18	327	16	439
17 - 40	469	50	230	43	28	6	41	5	125	6	159
40+	189	20	93	17	5	1	5	1	14	1	34
Total	**929**		**539**		**457**		**747**		**2106**		**2647**

Source: Tuvalu 1991a. 1991 Population and housing census volume 1: basic information

Note: In 1991, female professionals consisted of 19 nurses and matron; 36 primary teachers; and 15 pre-school teachers. In 1979, female professionals consisted of 19 nurses; 7 health workers; 28 primary school teachers.

Table 20: Sales from handicrafts ($A), 1981 to 1991

Year	Domestic	Export	Total
1981	5097	-	5097
1982	13477	-	13477
1983	21808	-	21808
1984	42529	1521	44050
1985	37080	1738	38818
1986	47397	4203	51600
1987	58448	1755	60203
1988	64449	3122	67571
1989	55373	378	55751
1990	51365	2194	53559
1991	63045	6286	69331

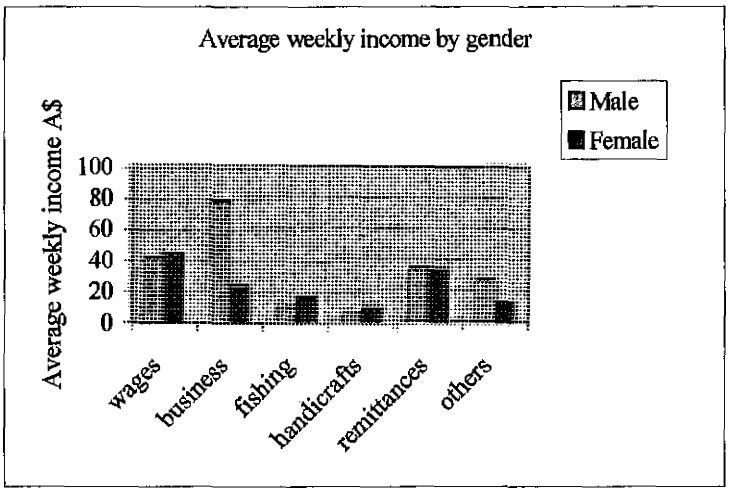
Source: Tuvalu undated. Tuvalu: National report on the review of the Nairobi forward-looking strategies.

Table 21: Number of persons earning income by sex and region

	Urban		Rural	
Sources of income	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
Wages	602	332	425	191
Businesses	47	85	42	77
Marketing	44	48	155	71
Handicraft	15	266	64	468
Pension	16	4	19	9
Other	10	4	9	8

Source: Tuvalu 1991a. 1991 Population and housing census volume 1: basic information

Figure 2: Average income by sex

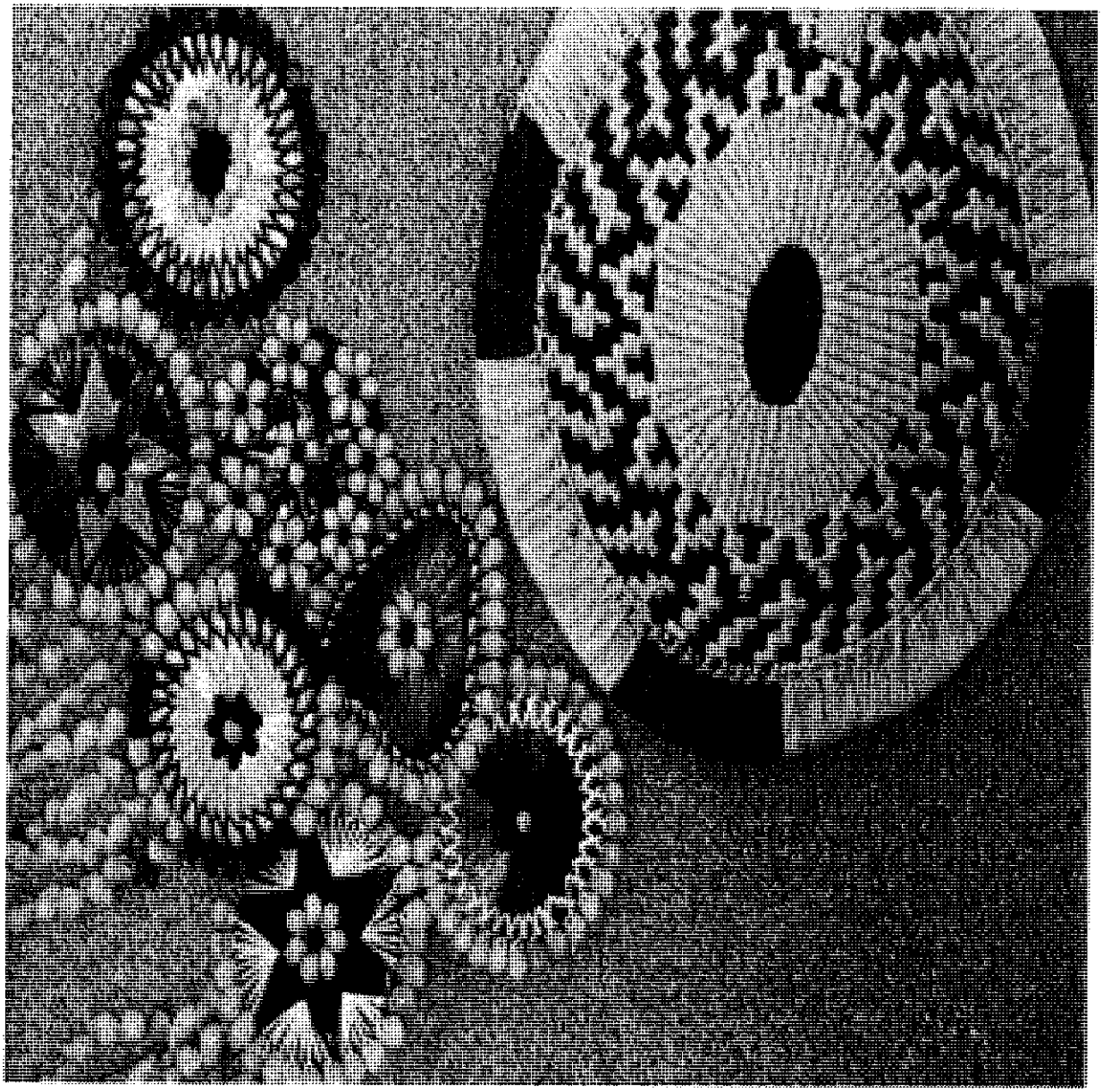


Source: Tuvalu 1998b. Household income and expenditure survey 1994.

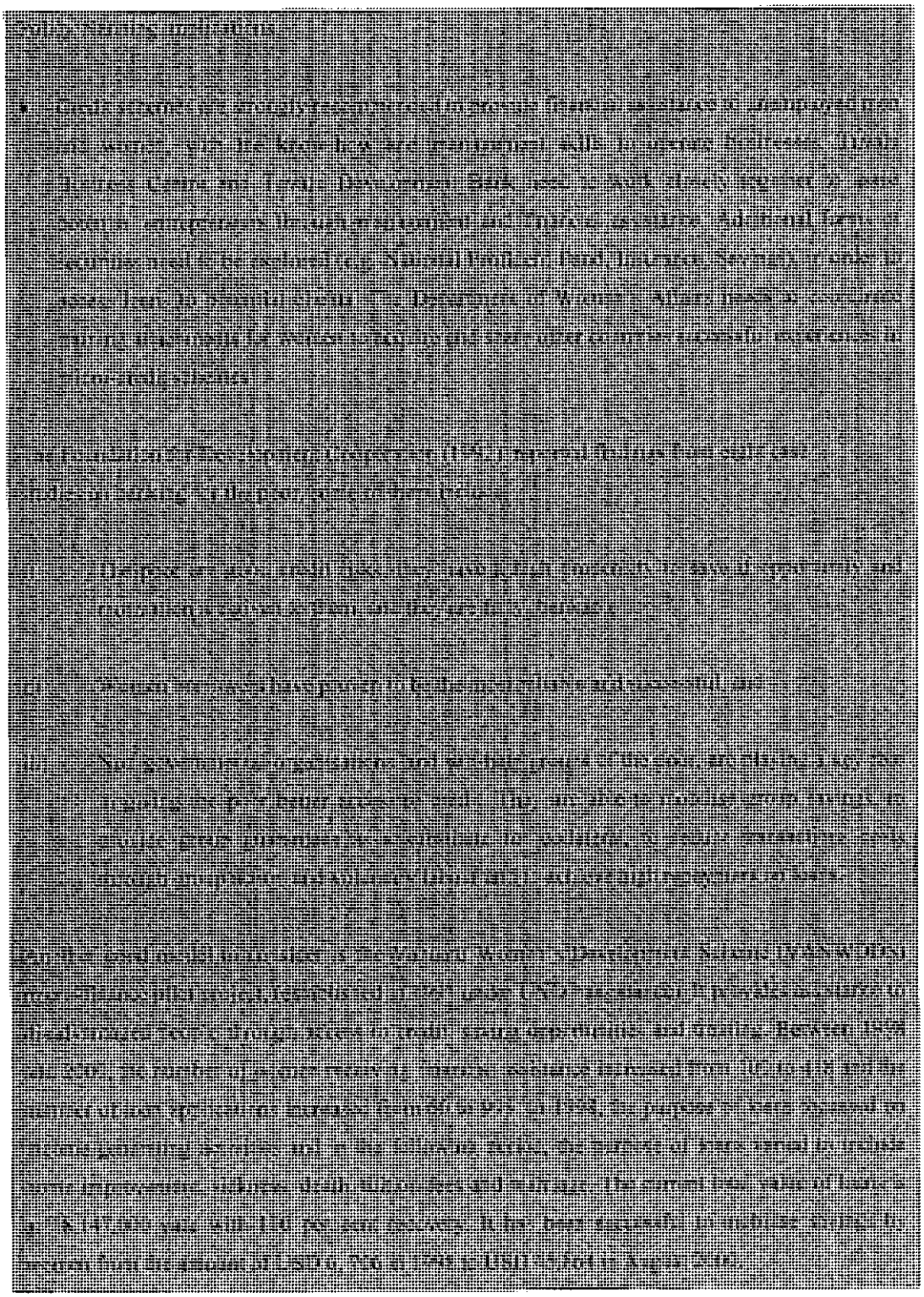
Table 22: Development Bank of Tuvalu, outstanding lending portfolio as of 31 October 2000

	Male		Female		Group	
Sectors	**Value (A$)**	**Number**	**Value**	**Number**	**Value**	**Number**
Agriculture	52829	3	0	0	1879	1
Fishing	102142	32	10651	4	0	0
Commerce	804493	57	330671	44	70717	2
Personal	84224	22	46980	19	0	0
Total	**1043688**	**114**	**388302**	**67**	**72596**	**3**

Source: Tuvalu Development Bank, 2000.



Tuvalu handicraft sales have become an increasing source of income to women.



3.4 Agriculture and fishing (formal and informal)

3.4.1 Agriculture

The contribution of agriculture to GDP has been around 20 per cent in recent years. Copra exports began in the 1840s with the production of coconut oil, and switching to the export of copra around 1870. There is a decline in the cultivation and production of giant swamp taro in Tuvalu as evidenced by a number of abandoned pits. Saline water has been claimed to have affected the production of taro, the major root crop (Flemming and Hardaker 1995). Development of cash economy and dependency on imported food also contribute to low taro production. Table 23 showed that most of the land space is used to plant coconut and limited land space is allocated to the cultivation of taro and sweet potato, resulting in high dependency on imported rice.

The land area is small and the quality of the soil is poor for supporting agricultural development; however, agriculture that mainly supports subsistence and copra production is the only export commodity. Other factors such as the fragmented ownership of land holdings, fragmentation and scattered nature of islands and poor communications constrain the development of agriculture.

Flemming and Hardaker (1995) highlighted other threats to agricultural development, including overpopulation, inappropriate technology, agro-deforestation, increased risk of introduced pests and diseases, changing roles of women, urbanisation, growing malnutrition and poor health of people.

Although such factors limit the scope for commercial agriculture, the supply of food remains a major economic contribution by agriculture, as evidenced by the number of households engaged in food production. Women in rural areas play significant roles in the production of copra, sweet potatoes, vegetables, chickens and ducks (see table 24). Poultry production expanded from 12729 in 1980 to 30558 in 1989 (Tuvalu 1990). Among the locally produced foods and other products for cash (e.g. fresh fish, dry salt fish, copra, toddy, sweet potatoes, taro, vegetables, pigs, chickens, cooked food, and handicrafts), handicrafts are the major source of income in Tuvalu, especially for women in both rural and urban areas. The types of handicrafts they make include mats, baskets, fans, string, thatch, carvings, and bead shells.

The narrow scope of commercial agriculture limits the use of agricultural outputs as inputs in processing industries (Flemming and Hardaker 1995). To some extent, some agricultural products such as toddy and handicrafts have been processed for the domestic markets but on a limited scale.

Vegetable gardening is sustainable in the outer islands.

Table 23: Agricultural land use (1986)

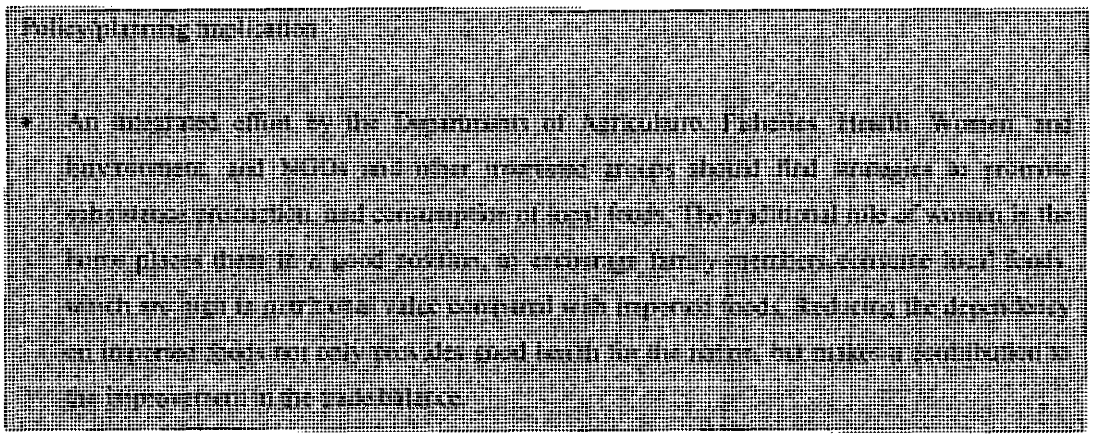
Island	Coconut Land	Pulaka pits (ha)	Sweet potato (ha)
Naumea	315.42	16.62	0.0111
Nanumaga	228.24	3.2	0.4887
Niutao	195.03	19.18	0.0432
Niu	191.12	4.7	0.0982
Vaitupu	428.14	15.59	5.0553
Nukfetau	239.77	2.98	0.0511
Funafuti	253.7	2.02	0.2518
Nukulaelae	140.77	2.27	0.3143
Niulakita	36.09	-	-
Total	**2028.28**	**66.56**	

Source: SPC, undated. A report on household food security in Tuvalu

Table 24: Activities by sector and gender

	Urban		Rural	
Sector	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
Copra	86	58	708	620
Sweet potatoes	98	168	282	340
Taro	194	52	976	448
Toddy	413	8	898	13
Garden Vegetables	171	206	296	318
Pigs	603	324	1053	722
Chickens/Ducks	271	385	722	1126
Other	5	10	26	20
	1841	1211	4961	3607

Source: Tuvalu 1991a. 1991 Population and housing census volume 1: basic information.



3.4.2 Fishing

Small canoes are the major means of traditional fishing, which takes place within or just beyond the reef. The government has put effort into the development of marine resources, particularly in the areas of tuna export, licensing of foreign fishing vessels, and fish production for subsistence use and the domestic market.

Reef gleaning, or the collection of seafood at low tide by women and children, once provided an important amount of protein for the community, especially when weather and sea conditions were too rough for the men to go fishing. Neither reef gleaning nor reef fishing by women; however, was considered to be a fishing activity. Collecting shellfish and crustaceans, as well as the preparation and sale of fish and shellfish still tends to be overlooked as "fisheries activities," even by the women themselves (Lambeth 2000).

Women continue to play an important role in processing and marketing fish. They rely heavily on reef resources for food and cash; however, it was reported that they are hardly involved in any fisheries development programme. Table 25 shows that there is significant number of women participating in reef fishing, and collecting shellfish and crustaceans. This implies that with the development of a cash economy, there are more economic pressures on women to harvest marine resources for food and cash. Overfishing in the lagoon increasingly becomes a problem. Fisheries management programme that involves the ban of fishing in certain areas hardly involves women or helps them understand the reason of implementing such activities. Consequently, they are not aware of any conservation methods to manage reef resources (Lilian Fay, pers. comm November 2000).

When women do not participate in any fisheries programme activities, their needs will not be properly addressed.

Women are involved in primary and secondary fish processing mainly for food consumption. Men are usually responsible for gilling and gutting fish for sale at the National Fishing Corporation of Tuvalu (Naficot) community fisheries centres. Primary processing involves gutting, scaling and cleaning. Secondary processing involves frying, boiling, baking and steaming, mainly for family consumption. Salting and drying fish is the common method of preserving fish. Another method of preserving tuna is to wrap it with leaves and bake it in the underground over overnight, and dry it the next day. If processed well, it can be preserved for months. Most of the outer islands are without electricity or refrigeration and these methods provide an important way of preserving excess fish for the family and for sale (Lambeth 2000).

Local feedback reported to the author indicates that SPC Community Fisheries training workshop in Tuvalu partly contributed to the improvement of the quality of processed fish. Salted and dried fish currently sold at the NAFICOT are properly sealed with plastics. However, this may lead to more disposable plastics unless preventive measures are taken. Feedback from other community members indicated that some fish sold alongside roads are not properly cleaned. The fisheries department indicated the need for further follow up and extension of the training programme to communities. In addition, technical assistance from SPC would be required to develop a policy to enforce the quality of fish sold at the local market. The Director of Fisheries strongly suggested that before government tries to explore overseas market for tuna exports, the quality of fish sold at the local markets must be improved first.

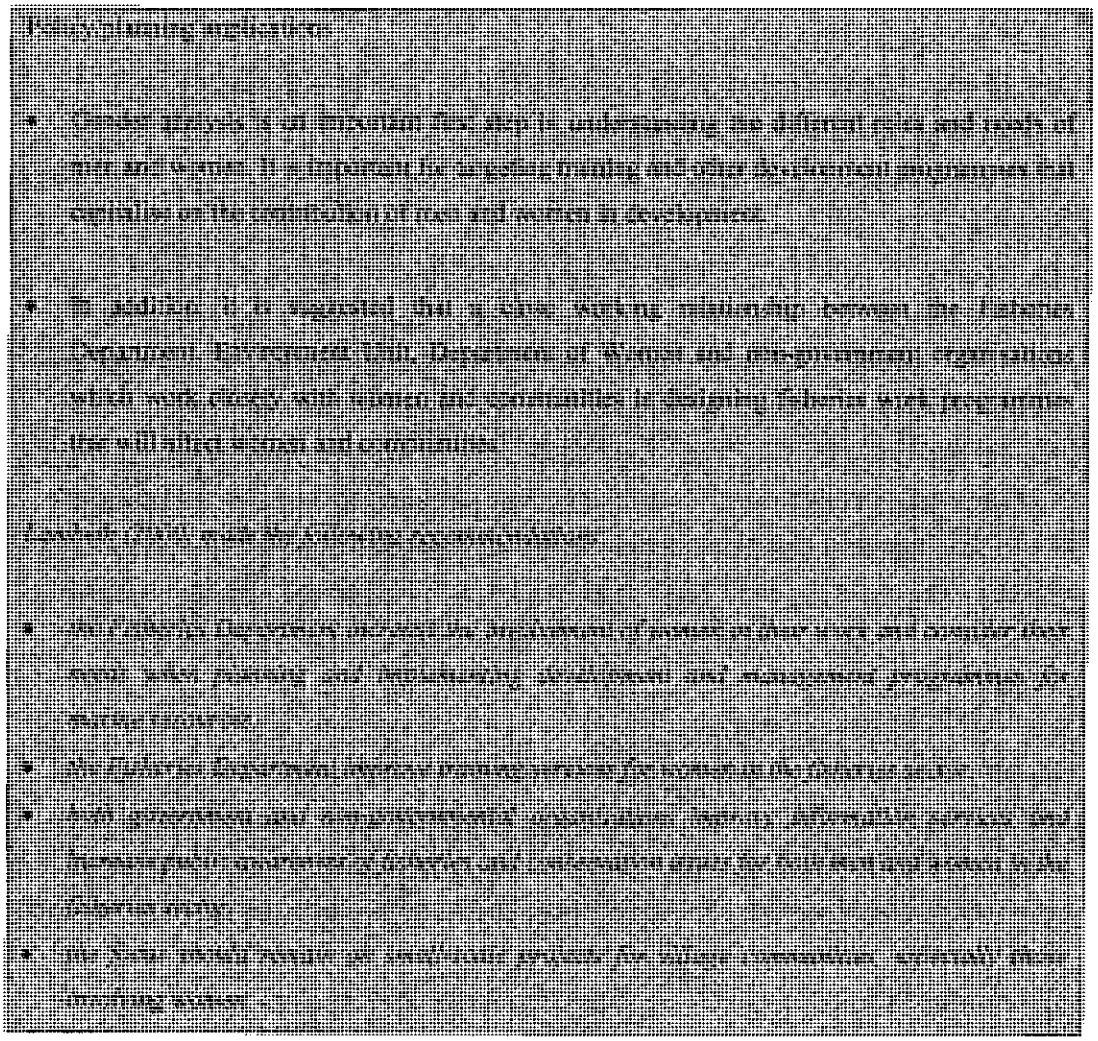
In Funafuti, the National Fishing Corporation of Tuvalu (Naficot) is the largest market for fresh, chilled and dried fish. It buys fish from both artisanal, and commercial fishermen and employs women on a temporary basis to process fish: fillet, smoked, stake, etc. About 80 per cent of the

catch is sold fresh and unprocessed and 20 per cent is processed for restaurants and hotels, depending on the demand. The major local markets are the Maritime Training School and the hospital.

Table 25: Use of fishing grounds by gender

	Urban		Rural	
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**
Ocean	435	10	828	9
Lagoon	557	56	783	115
Reef	473	161	987	368
Collection	284	224	358	682

Source: Tuvalu 1991a. 1991 Population and housing census volume 1: basic information



3.5 Legal and human rights

Part II of the Tuvalu Constitution contains what is generally referred to as the Bill of the Rights, which includes all the fundamental rights and freedoms that every person in Tuvalu is entitled to. The Bill of Rights is generally gender neutral meaning that the rights and freedoms must apply to everyone in Tuvalu. Article 11 of the Tuvalu Constitution states that *"every person in Tuvalu is entitled, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, religious beliefs or* ***sex,*** *to the following fundamental rights and freedoms*:-

- the right not to be deprived of life;
- the right to personal liberty;
- freedom from slavery and forced labour;
- freedom from inhuman treatment;
- the right to protection of the law;
- freedom of belief;
- freedom of expression;
- freedom of assembly and association;
- freedom from movement;
- the right to privacy of home and property;
- freedom from unjust deprivation of property; and
- freedom from discrimination

(Marsh 1988)

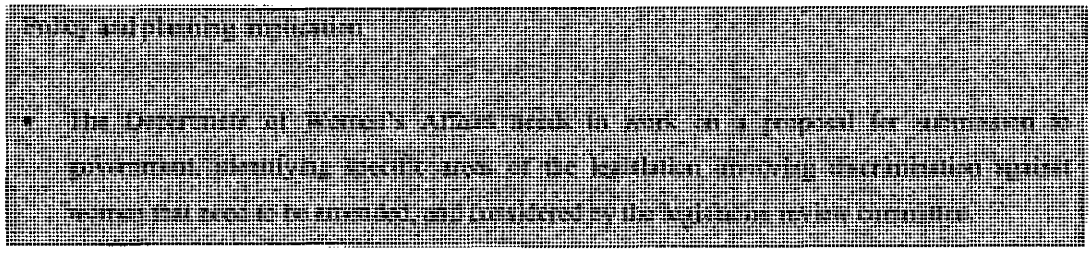
Note the inclusion of "sex" in Article 11 in comparison with the exclusion of "sex" in article 27. Article 27 provides a definition of discrimination but does not have any specific provisions against sexual discrimination or gender discrimination. This could mean that in Tuvalu it is lawful to discriminate against women because they are women. It is not an oversight that Article 27 does not forbid sexual discrimination; it is a deliberate omission, because the definition of discrimination includes all the grounds in Article 11 with the exception of "sex". For women in Tuvalu this would mean that even though they have a right to fundamental rights and freedoms parliament can still pass laws to discriminate against them which in essence could deprive them of some rights and freedoms.

In July 1999 the Tuvalu government ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), a sign of government's commitment towards improving the lives of women in Tuvalu. The obligations for government in progressing towards the elimination of discrimination are listed in Article 2 of the Convention. Of these one of the most important is government's obligation to make amendments to the Constitution so that gender/sex discrimination is expressly prohibited. This would mean that once the Constitution is

amended all discriminatory legislation must also be amended. Changes in the laws alone will not by any means change women's lives. CEDAW recognises this and tasks governments to undertake all other changes in order for women in Tuvalu to have equality in reality. For Tuvalu this *may* mean changes to aspects of culture that discriminates against women and changes in attitudes. Both are progressive and may take a long time to eventuate. The full implementation of CEDAW needs wide consultation with relevant stakeholders, including women, and a working understanding of the necessary changes required to promote the quality of life for women, family and nation. Hence, amendment of the legislation is necessary to avoid discrimination against women in the work place, home and society. The constitution is under review and it would be appropriate if women are well represented so the amendment of legislation or a new constitution is made in line with their needs and the welfare of the family.

The National Council of Women (NCW) has been active in advocating training and public awareness on legal literacy, CEDAW, family law and providing counselling to women on their legal rights. The Tuvalu Department for Women has tried implementing a gender-mainstreaming programme that is yet to be adopted by government. In addition there remains a dire need for police training in Tuvalu on gender, human rights and other issues concerning women and children.

Tuvalu Family Health Association (TuFHA) has been active in advocating training on gender and reproductive health with a view to promoting the reproductive rights of women.



3.6 Shared decision making,

Before the local government reform, power was concentrated in the hands of the national government. Ministers approved everything including bylaw and budget made by the local government. The Fale-Kaupule Act was approved in 1997 and implemented on the first of January 1999. Fale-Kaupule refers to the traditional meeting hall, area (island) and assembly. At the Fale-Kaupule, only male elders at the village participate in decision making with the advice of the Secretary of the Kaupule on budget, development projects and other development issues as well as traditional activities (e.g. celebration and feasting). Decisions made at the Fale-Kaupule are passed

on to the Kaupule for implementation. During the Fale-Kaupule, if there are issues relating to women, women are requested to give clarification. During the most important traditional ceremonies, the matai is the only person who can give special speeches; however there are also occasions where women are allowed to take part in speeches, dancing and singing. Although women do not take part in the traditional decision making processes; men often consult the advice of their wives at home. Therefore, to some extent, women can influence decisions made at the Fale-Kaupule.

There are quarterly assembly meetings held at the Fale-Kaupule, when anyone 18 years old and above is eligible to speak, and vote for a resolution. However, it depends on the traditional culture of each island. For example, in Vaitupu, men and women above 35 or 40 years can vote; in Nui and Nukufetau, only men 50 years and above can vote for a resolution; in Funafuti, heads of the clans *(mataniu)* are allowed to vote for a resolution.

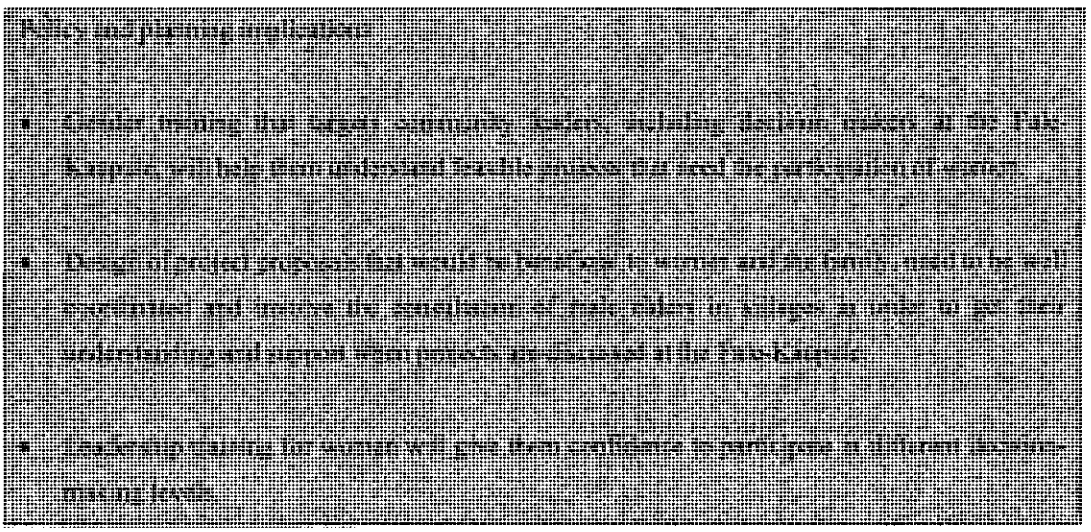
Feedback from interviews indicates that a number of women are being discouraged, that most projects submitted to the Fale-Kaupule by women for approval are often neglected (pers. comm. November 2000).

The Fale-Kaupule Act (1999) spells out clearly the equal participation of women in the Kaupule (local council) (Tuvalu 2000a). The council is comprised of elected members. Four women have been participating at the local government level, which is a stepping stone to higher decision-making levels. The participation of women at the national government decision-making level is limited, with two women participating at the Council of Secretaries and another woman holding the position of the President in the Public Service Commission. At the middle level management in government, two women hold directorship posts. In addition, women are still under represented during board and committee meetings (see table 28). During the last ten years, one woman was in politics for eight years. Since then, there has been no woman in politics.

Table 26: Men and women in decision making positions.

Decision-making position	Men	Women
Tuvalu Philatalic Bureau Board	4	1
Vaiaku Lagi Hotel Board of Directors	5	1
Tuvalu Electrical Opcration Board	6	0
Tuvalu Telecommunication Cooperation	6	0
Tuvalu Development Bank		
National Fishing Cooperation of Tuvalu	5	0
Price Control Board	3	1
Development Coordinating Committee	12	1
Manpower Planning and Scholarship Committee	10	3
Public Service Commission	3	1
Lands Management Committee		
Project Working Group	16	4
Project Co-ordination Committee	20	3
Total	**90**	**15**

Note: The information was collected from different senior staff in government.



3.7 Environment

Tuvalu is vulnerable to various environmental problems due to its small size, and limited freshwater resources. Bektas (1992) highlighted the following effects that Tuvalu could experience as a result of global warming:

- sea level rise by around one centimetre per year;
- storms and tropical cyclones becoming more frequent and probably more intense;
- wave action becoming more destructive as offshore reefs provide less protection;
- changing ocean currents;
- increasing coastal erosion;
- increased flooding of low lying areas;
- loss of property and buildings;
- reduction in the fresh ground water lens;
- loss of mangrove forests, trees, seagrass beds and other plants, and a loss of the animals that depend on them;
- death of corals and other marine life as water temperatures rise;
- breakdown in ecological relationships;
- overfishing of the country's exclusive economic zone by drift nets of other countries;
- inadequate handling and disposal of water, sullage and solid waste;
- declining soil fertility and high soil salinity
- high population density and growth rate;
- deterioration of traditional sources of food;
- inappropriate local fishing practices;
- destruction of landforms;
- industrial and domestic pollution;
- deforestation;
- endangered species;
- deterioration of soils; and
- damage to environment caused by tourism

Women are the major users of natural resources. With the exception of Funafuti, more than 80 per cent of households depend on firewood for cooking. Women are largely responsible for collecting firewood for cooking. In Vaitupu, 61 per cent of the households use an open fire for cooking and in other surveyed islands, 49 per cent. Compared with Funafuti, 8 per cent of households use an open fire and 63 per cent use a kerosene stove (Tuvalu 1998b). A high dependency on kerosene stoves on Funafuti is mainly due to a shortage of firewood. Women also rely on traditional trees

for making handicrafts, medicines and other purposes. Trees can act as stablisers during natural disasters. For example, during the 1999 tsunami (tidal wave) in Papua New Guinea, those communities in areas with many trees suffered less damage than areas that had been cleared.
Women depend on reef resources for protein and for making handicrafts to earn income for the family.

The production of new materials makes life easier; however, many of these such as plastics, can be toxic to human health and the environment. Scientists advise that the best solution is to minimise the use of plastics until manufacturers can guarantee that their products are not harmful. Most plastics manufacturers do not report the ingredients of their mix in order to protect their 'trade secrets'. This makes it difficult for scientists to identify the problem chemicals. In Funafuti, plastics, including plastic bags, disposable nappies, food wrappings, and drink bottles, are seen on nearshore environments. The import of such materials, has made life easier for working mothers, particularly those in the urban area; however, it has been observed that women increasingly use disposable plastics with limited knowledge of the side effects on health and the environment. Plastics, and the chemicals they contain or produce during their break down or burning,

- may contribute to breast cancer in women;
- may affect male fertility;
- may effect unborn children;
- increases greenhouse gases and the breakdown of the ozone layer

(Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment home page).

Because women are responsible for most of the housework (shopping, food processing, house cleaning and child care), it is important that they are well aware of the suspected effects of plastics.

According to Lambeth (2000), the following local government regulations with regard to the conservation and management of marine resources are in place.

- The Fisheries (Trochus) Regulation 1990 prohibits fishing for *Trochus niloticus* in the territorial waters of Tuvalu.
- Under the Fisheries Ordinance, a complete ban on the use of explosives and poisons to catch fish.
- Several of the local government councils have made by-laws to regulate fishing in their waters. These include restrictions on gear, fishing methods, access to fishing areas, and species.
- On Vaitupu, fishing nets are forbidden inside the lagoon, except when the chief gives permission for special occasions, and then the people must pay in order to fish.

In addition, the island of Nanumanga operates an informal conservation/breeding programme by occasionally stocking one of their smaller enclosed lagoons, and ban fishing in this lagoon. As reported earlier, women are hardly involved in the development of such programmes to understand their implication on sustainable development.

Like other low lying atoll islands, Tuvalu faces problems to keep disposal plastics resulting from high dependency on imported items.

Table 27: Main types of cooking fuel by island (numbers are percentages)

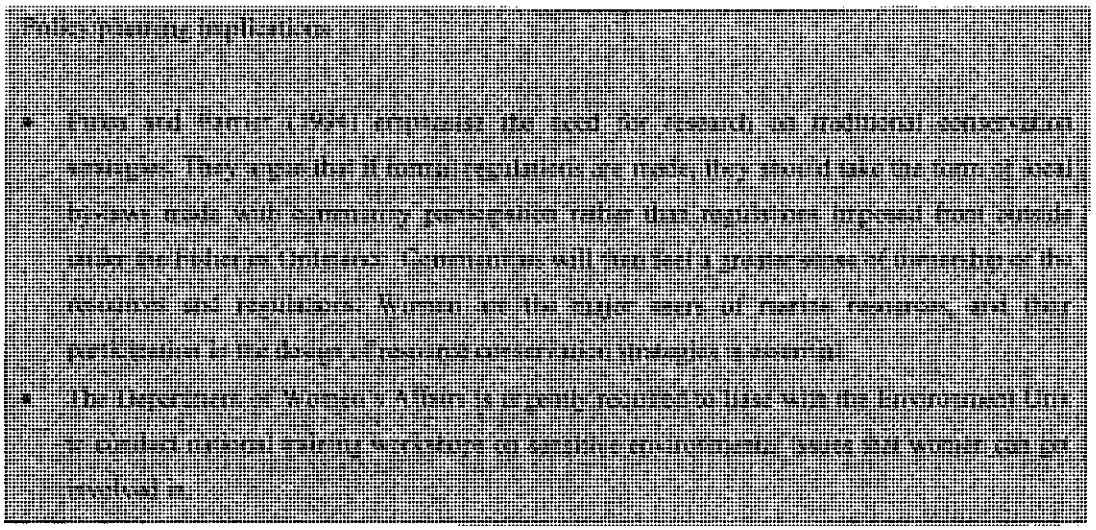
Island	Firewood	Kerosene	Gas stove
Nanumea	95.5	4.5	-
Nanumaga	95.5	3.8	-
Niutao	92.1	6.5	-
Nui	92.2	5.2	1.7
Vaitupu	92.3	5.7	2.1
Nukufetau	83.1	14.8	2.1
Funafuti	23.6	66.9	9.3
Nukulaelae	98.3	1.7	-
Niulakita	100	66.9	9.3

Source: Tuvalu 1991b. 1991 Population and housing census volume 2: analytical report.

Table 28: Types of cooking fuel by region (numbers are percentages)

Regions	Cooking fuel			
	Electric	Gas	Kerosene	Firewood
Funafuti	0.7	28.1	62.6	7.9
Vaitupu	0	0	38.6	61.4
Other islands surveyed	0	0	51.4	48.6

Source: Tuvalu 1998. Household income and expenditure 1994.



3.8 Culture and the family

3.8.1 Cultural identity

Puri (2000) said that culture is the lifeline for the survival and prosperity of the indigenous people of the Pacific. Without cultural identity, their social, emotional and political matrix is likely to crumble. Its continued practice is vital for social and political harmony among indigenous people. Most Pacific Island nations have not maintained laws to protect their traditional knowledge and expressions of indigenous culture.

Tuvalu National Budget (1995) highlighted the objectives of Tuvalu cultural affairs as follows:

- to maintain the lifestyle and culture to be in line with the level of development planned over the period;
- to protect, preserve and promote the cultural heritage through legislative and public campaign;

- to ensure the maintenance and protection of historical sites by conducting research in traditional culture;
- to encourage the development of traditional knowledge and skills through training workshops and seminars;
- to retain the cultural identity of the nation; and
- to establish Tuvalu Culture Council and Tuvalu centres.

Institutional mechanisms are being established to improve cultural management and enhance Tuvalu cultural identity. Projects that have cultural implications are referred to Development Coordinating Committee (DCC) for cultural impact assessment. Tuvalu cultural council act 1991 facilitates the development of national cultural policy for Tuvalu. The proposed establishment of a multi-purpose cultural centre will accommodate parliament, court sessions, conferences as well as to house the library and archives, some museum facilities and historical displays. Storing arts and crafts by men and women, is important to maintain traditional skills and knowledge. Government also propose to involve the participation of individuals and community groups to record traditional skills such as medicine, cooking and architecture for posterity. The participation of women should be encouraged as they are mainly responsible for making medicines, handicrafts, and preparing traditional foods.

The participation of traditional leaders in the development process has been found to be successful, and the process should be maintained for future design and formulation of corporate and sectoral plans.

The elders in communities normally meet at the Maneapa (traditional meeting hall) to discuss administrative issues concerning the islands. Each family unit is allocated a place in the *Maneapa* but occupied by the oldest male member in the family, while women often sit at the back of men and listen to discussion of issues. As discussed earlier, women do not take part in the traditional decision making processes; however, men often seek the advice of their wives at home.

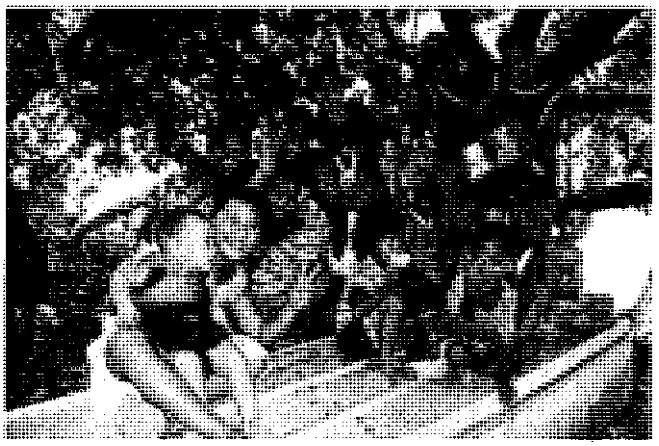
In Tuvalu, the dialect and some aspects of the culture differ between the northern islands (Nanumea, Nanumanga, Niutao and Nui) and the southern islands (Vaitupu, Nukufetau, Funafuti and Nukulaelae).

Fighting, arguing, sexual promiscuity and drunkenness are considered socially unacceptable behaviours. Negative public opinion effectively helps prevent socially unacceptable behaviour. The fear of public criticism controls peace among Tuvaluan communities. The Island Council administers the affairs on the islands, and is expected to set the standard of behaviour in

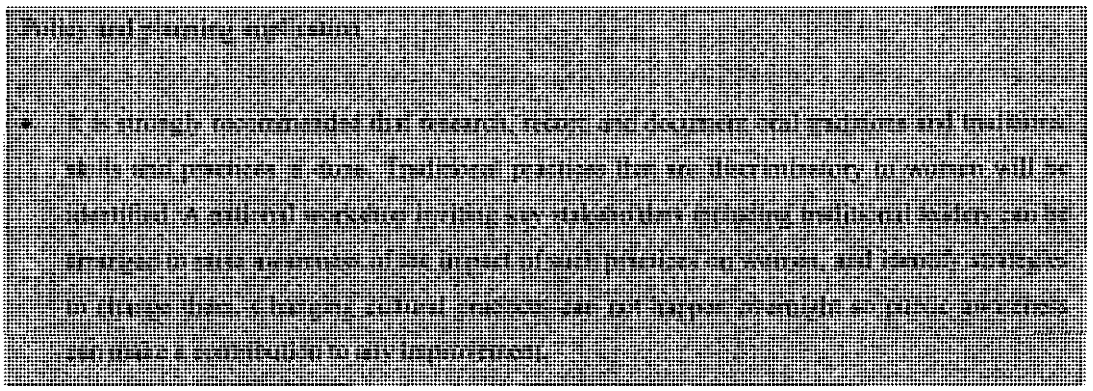
communities. The appointment of leaders rotates among older community members, although it is sensible to nominate councillors based on their behaviours.

3.8.2 Extended family

The extended family remains the traditional way of supporting each member of the family, particularly the old people or children whose parents separate or pass away. Women are likely to shoulder all of the responsibilities of looking after the old people and adopted children, providing extra burden to their normal work for their own family. Working families are obliged to meet requirements of other relatives, by allowing them to reside with them in Funafuti. This has contributed to unemployment and other social problems in the urban area. With the limited land space, the growing population in the urban area (1376 persons per square kilometre in 1991) will continue to place pressures on land and marine resources.



Children of this extended family live within a few foot steps of each other.

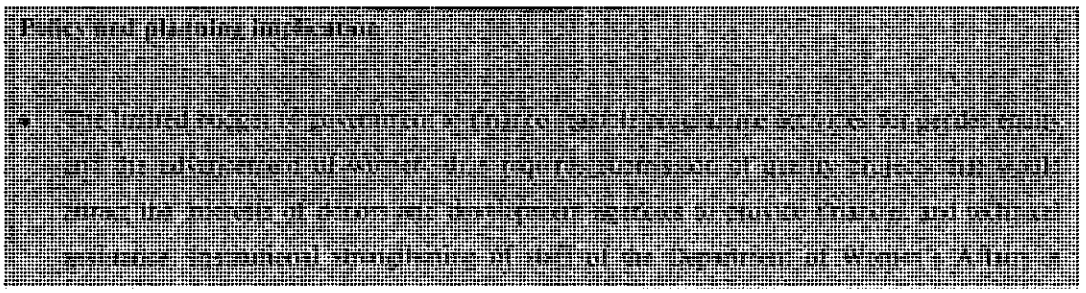


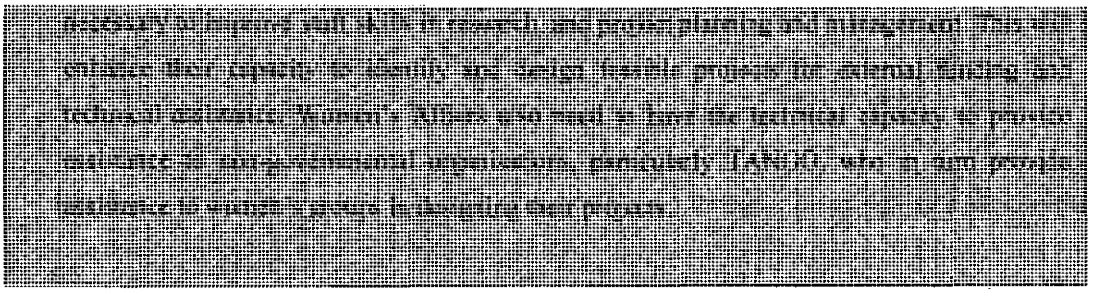
3.9 Mechanisms to promote the advancement of women

The government's commitment towards the advancement of women dates back to the mid 1970s, when the National Council of Women (NCW), a non-governmental organisation was established. Following the Beijing Plus Five, the Department of Women's Affairs was established in 1999 within the Ministry of Health, Women and Community Affairs to work in partnership with NCW to promote the advancement of women. Further commitment by the government is reflected through the endorsement of the National Women's Policy and its Action Plan aimed at reinforcing 'the elimination of discriminatory legislation and practices by government departments and agencies that hinder women's ability to participate and benefit from development'. The major constraints include the lack of resources (personnel and funds) to undertake gender training, gender budget analysis, policy and sector analysis, and the compilation of gender disaggregated data for analytical purpose.

The 2000 budget estimate for Ministry of Health, Women and Community Affairs was allocated 14 per cent (A$2,042,693) compared with 11 per cent (A$1,287,627) in 1999, of the total core budget. Of the total 2000 core budget, 6.5 per cent was allocated to Women's Department for salary and other operating costs. With the given budget, the Department was expected to implement a number of programme activities including the Department of Women's Corporate Plan, baseline gender disaggregated data, and gender training. The major obstacles encountered include the lack of resources (human and finance) to implement such activities (Tuvalu 2000a).

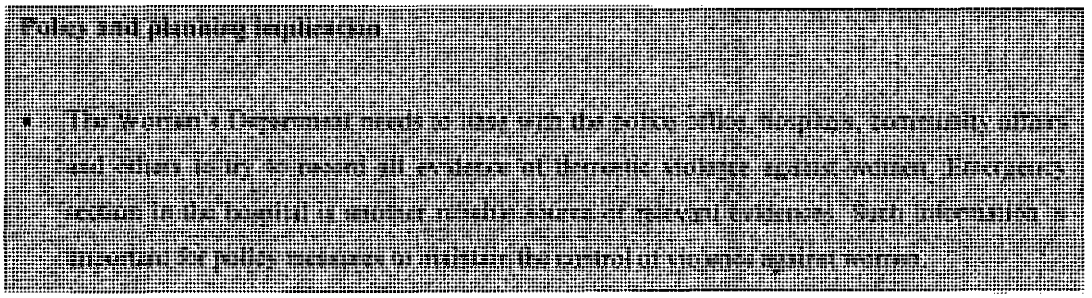
Tuvalu Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (TANGO), established in 1986 assists members, including women's groups in preparing project proposals, seeking funds from development agencies, and promoting their needs to government. Financial and technical assistance is provided by Australia Foundation for Asia and the Pacific (AFAP), Canada and the Government of Tuvalu. Under the current management, training programme activities provided to members on project planning and management was provided to members, resulted in the completion of 22 project proposals, in areas related to credit, coconut replanting, nutrition, handicraft development, skills training, marketing, and water and sanitation; and submitted to government for European Union funds.





3.10 Violence

It has been suggested that violence against women in Tuvalu exists but at a minimal level compared with other Pacific Island countries and territories. However, evidence of such cases is not well recorded. The latest criminal report of 1998 and 1999 does not show which offences involved violence against women. Feedback from the police office indicate that in most cases women reporting their husbands often dropped the case, which therefore does not reach the conviction stage. The fact that 70 to 80 per cent of those doing housework are women, implies that most women are dependent on their husbands for income. Taking husbands to court can lead to divorces, and women not only lose their husbands, but also the father of their children. Tuvalu constitution has a provision that gives rights for everyone, including women, to claim for financial support for themselves and their children; however, most women are not aware of how to process such a claim. The 1998 Annual Report for Women and Community Affairs Division included one rape case. Violence against women in Tuvalu's cultural context is often considered a shame and as such, any reported incidents would stigmatise the abuser as well as his immediate and extended family (Tuvalu 2000a). It is observed that violence against women, often results from alcohol abuse. The influence of alcohol on men has increasingly brought problems to families particularly, in the urban areas. On the outer islands, where alcohol is rarely found, violence is not common (pers. comm. November 2000). The law against abuse, assault and rape is not effective for prosecuting such cases.



3.11 Peace and justice

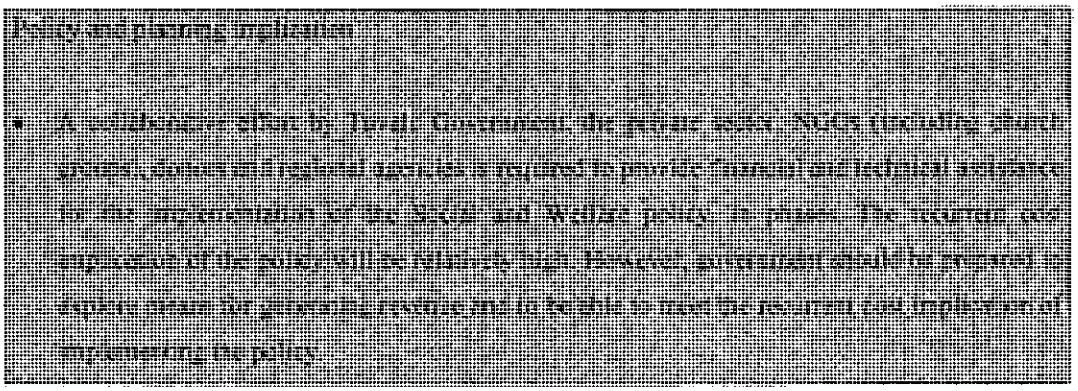
In Tuvalu, the church plays an important role in the culture of peace. 'In a culture of peace, power is evenly distributed. And no one feels justified in using superior strength to coerce, humiliate or defeat another – whether it is a parent over her or his child, a husband over his wife, a police officer over an accused, or a powerful country over a weaker one. There is mutual respect for all and everyone feels safe and secure (Wolfe and Vogler 2000:8)'. Samuelu (1983) said that traditionally, most of the land was owned by the chiefs, who were also known to be warriors. Land disputes were common in the old days and were often resolved through fighting, which sometimes resulted in death, with the winning chief acquiring most of the land. The conversion of chiefs following the introduction of Christianity put an end to fighting over land. The converted paramount Chief, Fakaopo (renamed Solomona by Elekana the first pastor), ordered all chiefs and landowners to redistribute their land, so those with limited land acquired more land shares. Before the establishment of the native courts in 1894 under the British rule, Samoan pastors acted as peace keepers in land disputes. To date, settlement of land disputes is done by land courts on each island, which is difficult and often creates more unhappiness among the defeated families. It was reported by the interviewees that land disputes are increasingly common with development changes. Given the limited land resources and the growing population, demand for land is increasing, and land disputes are becoming more of an issue.

The Constitution of Tuvalu (1986) states that "the stability of Tuvaluan society and the happiness and welfare of the people of Tuvalu, both present and future, depend largely on the maintenance of Tuvaluan values, culture and tradition, including the vitality and the sense of identity of island communities and attitudes of island co-operation, self-help, and unity within and among those communities" (Tuvalu 1995a). Happiness and welfare of the people also depends on the availability of food, adequate potable water, sanitation, shelter, and a supportive network.

A draft social and welfare policy for Tuvalu ensures 'that individual Tuvaluans live in a harmonious environment that encourages, improves and supports the cohesion of family, community, and nation within the global community'. Achievement of the vision would require considerable work and commitment from the Government, donors and regional agencies to provide financial and technical support to make it happen. Disadvantaged and vulnerable groups including persons with disabilities, unemployed, elderly, and children from any marital situation or those both outside marriage will be targeted in the implementation of the policy, to ensure that they have access to quality welfare services. Necessary legislation will be made to ensure the implementation of the policy.

Gender-based discrimination in some workplaces, such as unequal entitlements to pay, training and promotions, and sexual harassment in the workplace, are some of the reported problems. It

was also reported that sometimes there is reluctance to hire married women because of maternity benefit entitlements (Tuvalu 2000a). However, there is no supporting evidence to prove that such problems do exist.



3.12 Poverty

In the context of Tuvalu, poverty is defined differently in urban and rural areas. Although subsistence agriculture and fishing is accessible to everyone in the islands, there are alarming indicators of poverty related to food security, landlessness, and emerging squatter areas, which will be explained below.

3.12.1 Food security

As mentioned under item 3.4.1, the production of giant swamp taro is declining as evidenced by a number of abandoned pits. Monetisation has resulted in a shift from subsistence food production to the cultivation of crops for sale in the market. Corner (1996) said that land formerly used to produce the family's food may be converted to the cultivation of cash crops, and thus become vulnerable to effects of exchange rates and other macroeconomic policies. The same situation is happening in many Pacific Island countries. Money is important for paying school fees, contributions to the church, purchasing imported foods such as rice, and family contribution to traditional ceremonies. A number of farmers have neglected the production of traditional crops (e.g. pandanus) to plant more of coconut trees for copra production, the major export commodity. Women, who are the major users of pandanus trees for handicraft making, the major source of their income, are being affected. In Tuvalu 2028 hectares was planted with coconut trees mainly for copra production, and 66.6 hectares for *pulaka* (taro), for home consumption (see table 23).

The employment of seafarers may contribute to declining agricultural productivity. On average, each seafarer sends about A$100.00 per month to his wife and family. According to the Community Affairs Officer, a woman from the island carries all the burden; looking after the children, doing the housework, looking after the pigs, chickens and ducks and farming. A farmer and his family could have earned more than this amount, if he were working on his land for copra production, and still obtain food for the family from cultivating pulaka and fishing. In addition, he does not lose the benefits of being away from his family. The wife does not suffer the consequence of doing everything on her own. In other words, the opportunity cost of employing a seafarer abroad is envisaged to exceed the amount he earns from working on a ship. A study on the assessment of the impact of employing seafarers abroad will be interesting for policy makers.

3.12.2 Landlessness

Landlessness is becoming an alarming problem in Tuvalu. With the growing population, parcels of land will continue to be distributed among family members. More people will be competing for the limited land space for growing food. On Funafuti, the population is 3839 and the land area is 2.79 square kilometres. It is estimated that the population density is 1376 persons per square kilometre, compared with an average population density of 224 persons per square kilometre on the outer islands. Other constraining factors including environmental impacts on the development of agriculture as noted under item 3.7, will threaten food security in the long term.

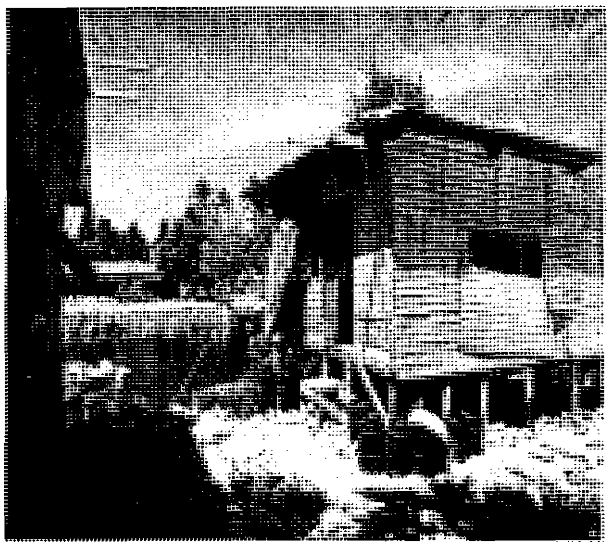
3.12.3 Squatter areas

Employment opportunities in the urban area, better health services and other factors continue to attract people from the outer islands. The strong extended family culture gives support by providing free accommodation to relatives coming from the islands. Eight per cent of urban households have more than 12 persons per household compared with 2 per cent of rural households (see table 29). On average, the number of persons per household in the urban is 7 compared with 6 in the rural areas. In the urban area, it is estimated that each person's average weekly income is A$42.4 (see table 30). It is also estimated that each household spends an average of A$176.60 a week on items including food, clothing, housing, transport, and electricity (see table 31). The largest proportion of the family's expenditure is on food, accounting for about 45 per cent. The information does not show how many people contributing to the weekly income of the household compared to the expenditure to determine whether the family is running on financial problem.

In rural areas, each individual earns an average weekly income of A$17.50 and each household spends approximately A$57.49 per week. Similarly the data does not tell us how many people

contributing to the household income. Rural people have the benefit of accessibility to land space for growing their food.

With the limited land space in the urban area to grow food, the high cost of living, and a continuous migration of people from rural to urban area, the people living in the urban area are prone to poverty in the future, unless necessary policy measures are taken into consideration. Signs of squatter houses are emerging in certain parts of Funafuti, and most houses have no proper water and sanitation facilities.



Settlement such as this in Funafuti highlights the problem of high population density.

Table 29: Household size

	Per cent of households	
Persons per house	**Urban**	**Rural**
1-4	22.3	36
5-8	48.2	49
9-12	21.6	13.8
More than 12	7.9	2
Average number of persons	7	5.8

Source: Tuvalu 1998b. Tuvalu household income and expenditure survey 1994.

Table 30: Average weekly income of Tuvaluans aged 15 years and over

Sources of income	Urban	Rural
Wage/salary (net)	23.5	5.63
Business	3.32	1.55
Agriculture	0.27	0.23
Fishing	1.17	0.39
Small activities	2.37	0.58
Handicrafts	0.62	1.29
Remittances:		
Overseas	6.42	5.63
Tuvalu	1.69	1.16
Others	3.05	1.06
	42.41	17.52

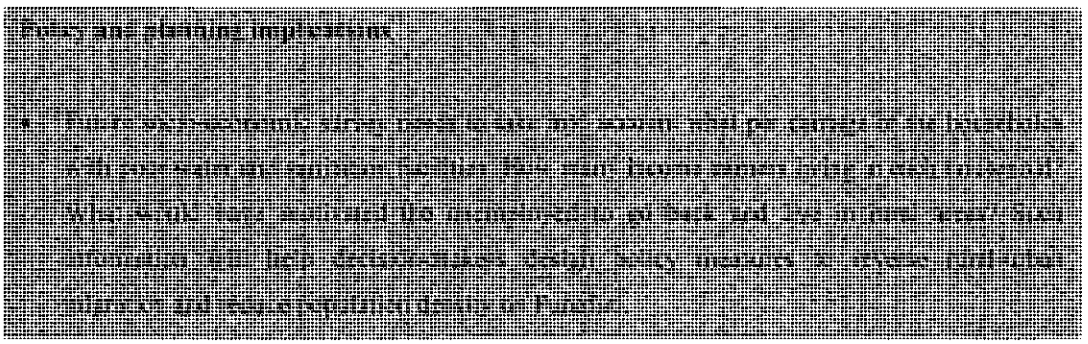
Note: Net income arrives after deduction of PAYE income tax and provident fund.

Source: Tuvalu 1998b. Household income and expenditure survey 1994

Table 31: Household average weekly expenditure (A$)

Expenditure item	Urban	Rural
Current housing costs	14.13	5.08
Fuel and power	12.27	7.1
Food and non-alcoholic beverages	80.57	31.06
Alcoholic beverages	4.62	0.47
Tobacco	4.47	1.91
Clothing and footwear	2.97	0.98
Household furnishings and equipment	9.48	1.36
Household services and operation	5.97	1.65
Medical care and health services	0.11	0
Transport	15.64	4.1
Recreation	14.49	0.88
Personal care	2.16	1.07
Miscellaneous commodities and services	9.72	1.8
Total	176.6	57.46

Source: Tuvalu 1998b. Household income and expenditure survey 1994.



3.13. Indigenous people's rights

Land is the most valuable resource for Tuvaluans. The value of land is often equated beyond its monetary value, hence investment in land is difficult. It is also against the law to sell land to non-indigenous persons; however leases are allowed (Leupena and Lutelu 1987). Tuvaluans view land and *pulaka* (taro) pits not as economic assets but possessions for security and status in the community. The status of a person used to depend on his hard work. A person who grows plenty of *pulaka* is more highly regarded than one who grows plenty of coconuts. This is because cultivating *pulaka* requires more labour input. Also on festivity day, a competition is held to find who grows the most number of pulaga. Sometimes, a person can distribute the produce of one of his pulaka pits to members of families on the island. Through this effort, a *vakalalo* (one who possess few pieces of land and *pulaka* pits) can claim the title of vakaluga which takes him to a higher status above vakalolo (Samuelu 1983). Such traditional cultural practices need to be maintained for food security.

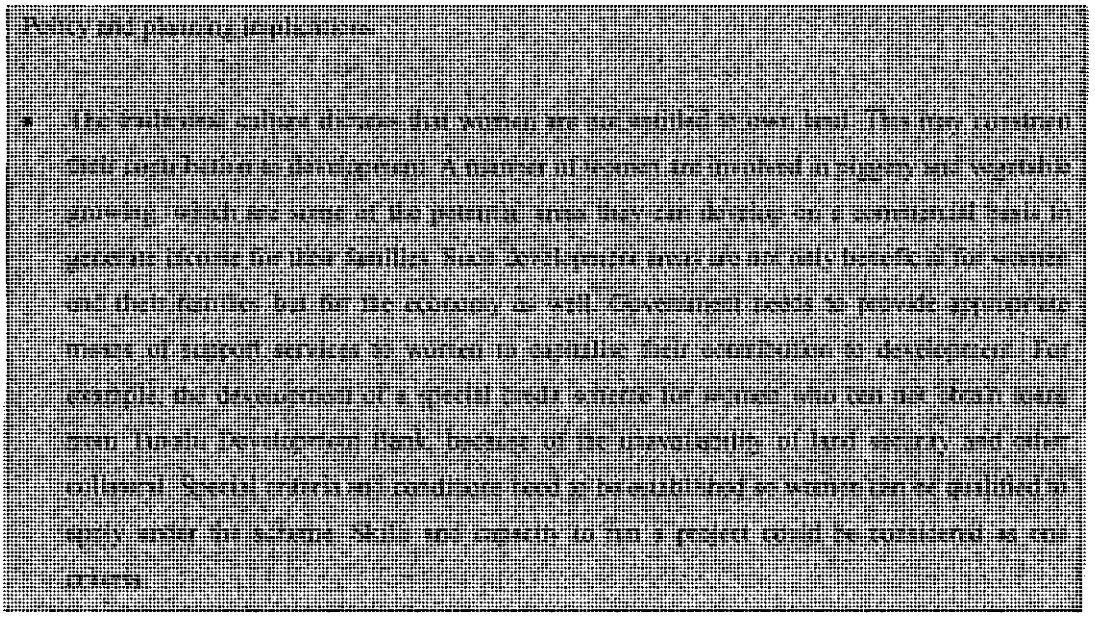
Samuelu (1983) also said that communal land on most islands of Tuvalu was under the control of the chiefs, who maintained their titles until the coming of the pastors. On Nukufetau, the *motu o aliki* were reserved for the chiefs, however during the harvest of the three islets, each member of the community received a share. Realising that soon there would not be enough produce to feed the growing population, the *motu o aliki* was transferred to the whole community and renamed

motu fakagamua. The land is administered by the island council. Produce, particularly coconut, is sold and the cash is kept in a special island fund.

Land is normally divided among the *fanauga* (family) members after the death of the parents. However, in some traditions, the father does not divide the land. It is the responsibility of his heir or successor to ensure that the offspring work on the land to maintain a successful livelihood. This land ownership is known as *kaitatiri.* Though it is good for avoiding fragmentation of land, it prevents individuals from using land for investment purposes.

In the traditional custom, the eldest son obtains the biggest piece of land and the largest *pulaka* pit. However, the father observes his children to choose the best successor. The eldest son can lose this credibility if he has neglected his parents, which is usually the case among employed offspring who fail to send money to their parents. Occasionally, a daughter may be chosen to be the temporary heir before the *fanauga* agreed to the division of their land (Samuelu 1983). Traditionally, women are not entitled to own land, as they marry and depend on their husband's land. The intent is to maintain land titles under the father's name. In the event that women become neglected by their husbands, their brothers are prepared to ensure that they have access to the benefits of the land resources. During marriage, women still have access to the resources but are subject to the brother's consent.

When there are disputes among the descendants of the grandfather, land is distributed among the children (*fanauga*) in such a way that the eldest son receives the largest share of land and most of the *pulaga* pits.



Annex 1 Baseline Studies for Pacific Platform for Action

Baseline Studies for Pacific Platform for Action (PPA)
TUVALU/VANUATU/NEW CALEDONIA

1. INTRODUCTION

This proposal is the result of discussions between SPC's Pacific Women's Resource Bureau (PWRB) and the Planning Unit. The purpose is to focus the efforts of the PWRB on identifying critical issues affecting women in Tuvalu, Vanuatu and New Caledonia. This is a follow-on to the Kiribati study conducted in March 2000 and also in accordance with the outputs for the PWRB for the July – December 2000 period.

2. THE KIRIBATI EXPERIENCE

The baseline study for Kiribati identified critical issues affecting women in Kiribati. The report has since been produced and is currently being reviewed by the Government of Kiribati. After it is endorsed by the government, it will serve as a tool for planners and decision-makers in Kiribati to effectively address areas of critical concern to women there. The report will also be widely distributed as a model for other member countries to use.

As a further step in fulfilling the monitoring requirements for the PPA, the results of the study will be incorporated into the PPA database, currently being developed jointly by SPC's PWRB, Planning Unit and Library.

The findings of the Kiribati study were discussed as a case study during the SPC/PWRB Micronesian sub-regional meeting, held between 8 and 11 March 2000. The purpose was to demonstrate the importance of gender disaggregated data, to help policy makers and planners to:

- identify critical areas of concern affecting women and development;
- develop national policies and strategies and, programme priorities; and
- monitor and evaluate progress on the Pacific Platform for Action.

The study highlighted four major areas of concern for women in Kiribati, including health, domestic violence, women's access to credit, and non-formal education. Gender issues are cross-sectoral, thus it is important that the PWRB address them in collaboration with relevant SPC programmes, the women's focal point in Kiribati, NGOs and government ministries and departments. The report will be included in the PWRB/PPA database, and provide information to researchers, donors, regional and international agencies interested in gender equity, and the advancement of women.

3. Tuvalu/Vanuatu/New Caledonia

A similar study has been conducted in Tuvalu and Vanuatu and one is proposed for New Caledonia. Field visits will provide more insight to the current situation and preliminary research and literature collection is currently being conducted for all three countries.

Project Details

Outlined below are the details for the Tuvalu/Vanuatu/New Caledonia project.

1. GOAL:

To contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in Pacific Island countries and territories by supporting national actions towards gender equity and the advancement of women.

2. OBJECTIVE:

To undertake baseline studies on women's issues in Tuvalu, Vanuatu and New Caledonia.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE:

3.1 To collect data related to PPA's thirteen critical issues:

- heath,
- education and training,
- economic empowerment,
- agriculture and fishing,
- legal and human rights,
- shared decision making,
- environment,
- culture and the family,
- mechanisms to promote the advancement of women,
- violence,
- peace and justice,
- poverty,
- indigenous people's rights, and
- new emerging areas
  (e.g. affirmative action for women; gender representation; women in media, training and research; women and internal armed conflict; SPC/PWRB, studies and assessments)

3.2 To visit relevant government departments, private enterprises, NGOs, women's and men's groups, to learn their experiences in any of the above issues.

3.3 To draft recommendations in consultation with relevant stakeholders for future planning towards gender equity and the advancement of women.

4. TIME FRAME:

	Activities:	**Dates**
4.1	Literature Review	August/September 2000
4.2	Training for PWRB staff	6 September 2000
4.3	Field visit Vanuatu	11 to 24 September 2000
4.4	Field visit Tuvalu	9 to 22 October 2000

4.5	Field visit New Caledonia	Mid-September to Mid-October 2000
4.6	Data Analysis	November 2000
4.7	Production of Report	December 2000

5. COUNTRY MISSIONS - TUVALU, VANUATU, NEW CALEDONIA:

Government departments, NGOs, private sectors to visit:

Women's Focal Point
Women's National Council
Central Planning Office
Statistics Bureau
Development Bank
Ministry of Education
Ministry of Health
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Ministry of Environment
Attorney General
Police
Cultural Affairs Department
Lands Department
Chamber of Commerce

In addition, contact with men and women from various backgrounds in both urban areas and villages, such as fishermen, farmers, community leaders, politicians, and businessmen and women.

5. RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYSIS:

5.1 Tuvalu/Vanuatu

Due to other priority areas in the Planning Unit, Senior Planner Rose Sinclair will undertake the studies in Tuvalu and Vanuatu only.

5.2 New Caledonia

Women's Development Officer Rolande Trolue and Catherine Sipa will undertake the study for New Caledonia as part of staff development for Ms Sipa and to enable the New Caledonia study to be completed at the same time as Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

Rose Sinclair will provide assistance in analysis of the data for all three countries.

List of Participants

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Mr Kiritimati Setoga, Health Statistical Officer, Ministry of Health, Women and Community Affairs
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Mr Seve Lausaveve, Secretary, Ministry of Internal Affairs
Mr Steve Boland, Asian Development Bank Consultant, Trust Fund, Ministry of Internal Affairs
Mr Taupale Mangaia, Elder
Mr Tine Leuele, Acting Secretary to Government
Mrs Lina Petaia, Senior Assistant Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister
Mrs Litata Tekaai, 69-year-old woman, Funafuti
Mrs Malama S. Paeniu, Training Officer, Office of the Prime Minister
Mrs Misalaima Nelesone, Secretary, Ministry of Health, Women and Community Affairs
Mrs Peggy Malo, Nutritionist, Ministry of Health, Women and Community Affairs
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Mr Semu Taafaki, Chairperson, Chamber of Commerce, Tuvalu.
Mr Motulu Pedro, Tuvalu Police Force

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