

# **Women's Employment and its Impact on Life in a Fijian Village**

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## Glossary of Fijian Terms

<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<i>bele</i>	green leaves of <i>H.manihot</i>
<i>cassava</i>	root crop, <i>M.esculenta</i>
<i>dalo</i>	commonly called taro, root crop, <i>C.esculenta</i>
<i>grog</i>	another popular name for <i>kava</i>
<i>kava</i>	a mildly narcotic beverage processed from <i>yaqona</i> and drunk socially
<i>kerekere</i>	the practice of borrowing among kin at the will of the borrower
<i>lovo</i>	earth oven
<i>mataqali</i>	the generally recognised basic land owning unit which is a clan or subdivision of a <i>yavusa</i>
<i>Turaga ni koro</i>	the elected headman of the village
<i>yaqona</i>	root crop, <i>P.methysticum</i>
<i>yavusa</i>	the widest kinship group, joining the descendants of a common ancestor

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

DAWN	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
DWC	Department for Women and Culture
FEA	Fiji Electricity Authority
GAD	Gender and Development approach
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LPC	Lomaiviti Provincial Council
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MFA	Ministry of Fijian Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PAFCO	Pacific Fishing Company Limited, Fiji
PGN	Practical Gender Needs
PO	Personnel Officer
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
SAO	Senior Agriculture Officer
SAP	Structural Adjustment Policy
SGN	Strategic Gender Needs
TNK	Turaga Ni Koro
UN	United Nations
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNPF	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WIA	Women's Interest Assistant
WID	Women in Development approach

# **Chapter 1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Introduction**

Men have often been significant beneficiaries of development interventions. This has stemmed from increasing the economic strength of the target population. In the 1990's there has been a shift by development agencies to a more equitable focus where a better quality of life for everyone in a household is more often the target.

Because men have predominantly held the recognised income earning role in the household, increases in employment opportunities resulting from development intervention tend to leave women to take on the work previously carried out by the men. This increases an already heavy workload for women.

The village of Natokalau, on the island of Ovalau in Fiji, is faced with a different situation. Here, many of the women have gained employment in a fish canning factory. This leaves some of the household and child-care duties formerly carried out by the women to the men of the village. This study reports on the results of studying this village to ascertain the effects of womens' employment.

## **1.2 Ovalau Island**

Ovalau is an oval shaped island to the east of Viti Levu (the main Fijian island) covering 86.7 square kilometres. The combined population in 1993 of Ovalau and the neighbouring island of Moturiki was 8,700, about 3,000 of whom live in or near Levuka, the main town (Donnelly et al.,1994). Except for the village of Lovoni located in the crater of the interior volcano, all the villages are situated on the coast.

Twyford and Wright (1965) classified the landscape as 66 per cent steep, 16 per cent rolling and 18 per cent flat. Most of the available flat land has villages located on it, leaving an estimated 6 per cent for farming (Pers. Comm., Senior Agricultural Officer (SAO), Levuka). Twyford and Wright describe the land as suited to permanent agriculture without improvement including pastoral farming, reforestation or forest preservation for catchment protection.

Ovalau has daily air and sea links to Viti Levu. Tourism is being developed focusing on the colonial historical importance of Levuka, the site of the fish factory. The town has one hotel and several guest houses. Publicity suggests that the "natural beauty and friendly people also add to its charms" (Donnelly et al.,1994).

Natokalau is one of approximately 35 villages on Ovalau, situated 15 km from Levuka on the road to the airport and the ferry wharf. It has a current population of approximately 406. The village is built, without planned physical development, around an open square. It has a community hall and a church.

### **1.3 History**

The company operating the fish factory started in 1964 with a Japanese financed 2000 tonne capacity freezer plant. A pilot cannery opened in 1970 with expansions in 1975, 1980 and 1981.

In 1986 the Fiji government acquired a 98 per cent holding in the company. With the help of \$17 million of Australian aid in 1992, the company developed the wharf, built a new 300-tonne capacity freezer, an office complex and 3000 new special freezer bins. The extensions provided increased capacity and efficiency in all aspects of unloading, storage, processing, canning and shipping (Advertising Feature,1992).

### **1.4 Pacific Fishing Company Limited (PAFCO)**

Currently there are three fish canneries operating in the western Pacific region in Fiji, the Solomon Islands and American Samoa. The Fiji cannery (PAFCO) supplies canned skipjack, albacore and yellowfin tuna to major overseas companies under 30 different labels.

The company has 350 permanent women workers, 180 temporary and 400 casuals, a total of 930 women workers. Between 700-1000 people, the majority of whom are women, are employed each day depending on fish stock numbers. PAFCO has become the mainstay of the economy on the island of Ovalau by providing employment.

PAFCO operated at a loss from 1982 to the end of 1986 due to poor prices. In 1988 the Directors reported a 61 per cent increase in total turnover compared to 1987 (Malani,1991).

PAFCO declared a sales income of \$230 million between 1987 and 1992 following the government takeover in 1987 (Emberson-Bain,1994). Emberson-Bain states that the factory also managed to maintain rising profit margins (between \$2 million and \$3 million) until 1992 when it sustained its first small net loss of \$81,301 in six years due to a 33 per cent drop in the supply of tuna and an offsetting 26 per cent decline in the wages and salary bill. In 1993 there was a much heavier loss of \$2.3 million attributed to Cyclone Kina, a two-week industrial dispute, and an eight week shutdown due to fish stock shortages (Emberson-Bain,1994). Tuna has become Fiji's fourth largest export commodity after PAFCO increased production from 35 to 80 tonnes of tuna a day. Canned tuna exports were worth \$31.4 million (5.3% of total exports) to the Fiji economy in 1993. This was expected to rise to \$39 million in 1994 (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, January 1995).

Fiji currently enjoys preferential access to the British market under the Lome Convention. It does not pay the 24 per cent duty levied on competitors such as Thailand (Fiji Supplement,1993). There is need for PAFCO to improve its efficiency if it is to survive in the changing international tariff scene.

Atu Emberson-Bain, a researcher and activist on labour, development and women's issues, identified in her study of the women's working conditions at PAFCO in 1994 the need for research into the effect that the women working at the factory has on their families and village life.

Furthermore, White (1990) asserts that continued growth in many manufacturing sectors depends on the performance of women workers so that to ignore the very real and special problems faced by them can only be counterproductive.

The research was planned after a visit to Natokalau village in August 1995 by the members of a UNIFEM gender planning workshop who identified a number of problems for the working women. Natokalau village was chosen as it was identified by the UNIFEM Chief Technical Officer as representative of the villages from which women working at the factory are drawn. Members of the village were also willing for the research to be undertaken there. The study focused on native Fijian women as no other ethnic groups live in Natokalau and are the major female ethnic group at the factory.

## **1.5 Research Objectives**

The aim was to determine the effect, on the household, of women increasing their productive role in the formal employment sector, Specifically, the objectives were:

- (a) to identify the problems and benefits associated with the employment for women both within the household and the community ,
- (b) to identify and describe factors influencing changes in gender roles due to the employment of women and,
- (c) to formulate recommendations to facilitate gender equal role changes where rural women are formally employed.

In the next chapter a review of women's employment in developing countries is presented - the emphasis is on the Fijian situation. The data collection approach used in exploring the topic is outlined in Chapter Three, and the information gathered on the village and the people relationships is described in the following chapter. In Chapter Five the specific effects of the women's factory employment is presented and, finally, a set of recommendations on improving the situation faced by the case study village women is listed.

## **Chapter 2. Women and Formal Employment in Developing Countries**

### **2.1 Women, Employment and Development**

Sen and Grown (1987) note that the socioeconomic status of the great majority of Third World women has worsened due to inappropriate development planning. They insist that women's relative access to economic resources, income, and employment has worsened, their burden of work has increased, and their relative, and even absolute, health, nutrition, and educational status has declined.

Any strategies for integrating women into the development process must be sensitive to differences in social and economic structures as well as to cultural values and beliefs if they are to serve as authentic channels for social change (Dixon, 1978). Gender inequalities exist at different levels such as conjugal, religious, kin and class. Moser (1989) claims that the vast majority of policy programmes and projects directed at women are concerned with their engendered position in the sexual division of labour as wives and mothers, and are intended to only meet their "Practical Gender Needs" (PGN) often neglecting to meet their "Strategic Gender Needs" (SGN) as well.<sup>1</sup>

Approaches which focus on women only and ensure women are given the opportunities to be involved in, and benefit from, development and not be further marginalised by development activities are referred to as Women in Development (WID). However, the historically prominent "welfare approach" seeks to maintain women in their traditional roles as mothers and child-rearers. Moser (1989) states that women were regarded as beneficiaries of development rather than participants and are not considered to have a significant productive role to play in development. In this approach, development agencies do not regard formal employment to be appropriate for women.

The "equity approach", as described by Moser (1989), was the original "Women in Development approach". Influenced heavily by the work of Esther Boserup as portrayed in *Women's Role in Economic Development* (1970), this approach recognized the critical contribution of women to economic growth and addressed the fundamental issue of equality. It was argued that if women

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 4 for definitions of PGN and SGN.

were brought more fully into the productive sphere, not only would they make a positive contribution to development, but they would also be able to improve their status in comparison to men (Razavi and Miller,1995).

The second WID approach is the "antipoverty approach" (Moser, 1989), in which the economic inequality between women and men is linked not to subordination, but to poverty . She argues that the emphasis shifts from reducing inequality between men and women to reducing income inequality.

Increased demands for productive employment for women have usually been met by donor support for small-scale income-generating activities for women. Although these activities helped poor women to contribute more effectively to meeting family needs, these "women-only" projects did little to overcome the women's economic marginalization and address their SGN (Razavi and Miller,1995).

The "efficiency approach", an additional theory, arose from the economic realization that 50 per cent of human resources (namely women) available for development were being wasted or under-utilized (Moser 1989). By increasing women's participation in development, it was assumed that development would be more successful and would improve conditions for women. Moser argues that the approach often ended up with women having to meet their PGN through employment and longer working hours and increased unpaid labour. Sen and Grown (1987) attribute the limited success of the antipoverty and efficiency approaches, in part, to the difficulties of overcoming traditional cultural attitudes and prejudices regarding women's participation in economic and social life.

The most recent WID approach to emerge is the "empowerment approach". The subordination of women is seen as a holistic process, encompassing every aspect of women's lives, including their families, work, legislation and state structures (Wieringa,1994). The empowerment approach, defined by Moser (1989), seeks to enhance the capacity of women to increase their own self-reliance and internal strength.

The approach recognizes the "triple role of women" and seeks, through "bottom-up" women's organizations, to raise women's consciousness to challenging their subordination (Moser,1989). Moser contends that short term strategies to assist women both in food production, through the

promotion of a diversified agricultural base, and in formal and informal employment, strive to meet PGN.

The empowerment approach also recognizes the importance of women's formal employment as a factor in increasing women's self-reliance. The main critique has been that the programmes have been deeply exploitative of women's time and labour (Braidotti et al.,1994). Nevertheless it is the increasing acknowledgement that formal employment for women facilitates "economic development" which appears to have influenced development planners most.

A more recent strategy, Gender and Development (GAD), is a change in focus from concentrating on women in isolation to examining the gender relations between men and women. By analysing the division of labour between men and women, their access to and control of resources, and identifying development constraints and opportunities, the GAD concept concentrates on empowering women and addressing gender inequalities.

GAD focuses considerable attention on formal employment through analysing the division of labour and the access and control women have of income. Whilst GAD is often seen by development planners as more inclusive of men than the women only focus of WID, GAD places a strong emphasis on the empowerment of women and directly challenges current female/male relations (Moser,1993). It is recognised that men are not only part of the problem faced by women in developing countries, but they also are part of the solution.

## **2.2 The Fiji Economy and Formal Employment for Women**

Women in Fiji face problems similar to women in many other developing countries. In "Women of Fiji: A Statistical Gender Profile (1994)" published by the Department for Women and Culture (DWC), the status of women is compared to that of men. The report (page 2) states that:

*" As a group, women are less likely than males to be trained at the tertiary level though they are better achievers at school. Women are less likely to gain access to the better jobs and less likely to be promoted. They earn less, they own fewer businesses and gain less access to credit. They are less well-represented in leadership. They are the victims of increasing violence and are to be found in increasing proportions amongst the unemployed and the poor."*

Fiji is a diversified middle-income country renowned in the Pacific region for its sugar industry, tourism, industrial base and substantial prospects for further forestry, fisheries and other agricultural development (World Bank,1991). Economically, Fiji is actively adopting the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) suggestions. This has resulted in tax free manufacturing and growth in the service sector.

Much of manufacturing increase has been in "sweatshop-style" factories where working conditions are poor and incomes received are low. Considerable investment has occurred in the garment industry in particular where women are 90 per cent of those employed (Barr,1990).

There have also been small improvements in the relative position of women in Fiji with increases in the level of education of economically active women, improved health indicator levels, and more equitable distribution of educational scholarships (King and Fallon,1995).

## **2.3 Rural Fiji and the Position of Women**

### **2.3.1 Tradition and Status**

Prior to the arrival of the British in the early nineteenth century, Fijian women were seen as practical, skilled and productive (Schoeffel and Kikau, 1980). Women's traditional roles included child-rearing, cooking, fishing, weeding food crops, horticulture in general, and collecting food, firewood, water, medicinal herbs, and bark for clothes (Schoeffel and Kikau,1980; Bolabola,1986). But Schoeffel and Kikau report that in 1874, when Fiji became a colony, the British proclaimed that native Fijian women were exempt from agricultural labour. And to this day subsistence agriculture and cash cropping remains predominantly men's work in most parts of Fiji (Watters,1969; Bolabola,1986).

Bolabola (1986) alleges that the women of Natokalau perform exclusively female roles, and that they are not involved in cultivating gardens, but they do, on occasions, gather vegetables. However, despite a century of programmes to teach Fijian women to follow missionary women, there have only been minor changes to Fijian domestic arrangements, such as a three meal per day pattern (originally food was cooked once each day and eaten at two meals) (Schoeffel,1988).

Schoeffel (1988) describes masculine authority and the superior status of males as widely considered to have been ordained by God, as well as by Fijian custom. While increasing numbers of Fijians are joining the urban middle class, those with education and material success are expected to maintain many of their traditional kinship ties and obligations (Schoeffel,1988). Bolabola (1986) notes the inferior status of women as exemplified by their secondary roles and their marginal participation, or exclusion, from ceremonies, rituals, decision-making and wars. She asserts that a women's status depended primarily on that of her father and she was expected to marry her social equal or superior.

### **2.3.2 Women and Land Tenure**

According to Overton (1994) Fiji's present land tenure system and practices are the result of a long process of evolution, simplification, distortion and institutionalism. Colonists hoped that by keeping communal control over land, the Fijians would stay in the villages, concentrate mainly on subsistence production, and remain under the control of their traditional male leaders (Overton,1994).

Within the village, inheritance rights and membership of social units are traced primarily through paternal descent (Schoeffel,1988). All members of patrilineal "kin-groups" (*mataqali*) which own land have a right to plant and collect wild products such as fruits, building timber and firewood (Nayacakalou,1978). Marriage gives women usufruct rights to her husband's land to enable her to perform her domestic duties (Bolabola,1986). Women also have exclusive rights to collect water and gather marine resources within their defined territory.

Fijian couples were traditionally patrilocal, with women moving from their own *mataqali* at marriage to another, usually their husband's, in a different village (Bolabola,1986). Ward (1994) notes that the security of land rights in the home village can only continue as long as the home village has adequate unused land. Bolabola states that a woman has a right to a home through her father or husband, but never as an individual, and usually as a subordinate partner.

The senior male members of the village are responsible for the administration of the land, the conduct of land disputes and the day to day control of land (Nayacakalou,1978). According to Sofer (1993) the ideology of Fijian rural society is perpetuated, and its inherent benefits championed, by the chiefly class. He contends that the state still allocates resources for the

improvement of services and welfare of the inhabitants to encourage them to stay on their land. This maintains the subordinate position of women due to their inferior access to, and control of, land and resources.

#### **2.4 Formal Employment for Women: Constraints to Changing Gender Roles**

Loutfi (1980) points out that the argument that women's "economically active" work outside the household is marginal and supplemental is based on the view that the women's family role is primal, though she concedes that childbearing is of central importance to society's survival. If domestic responsibilities were shared, however, women could potentially attain an equitable share of paid work, with the income and recognition that accompany it.

Women perform a much greater variety of tasks (usually unpaid) than men (UN,1994). The fragmented work is less easily measured and evaluated, as well as assisted, especially when it occurs in several locations (Loutfi,1980). Loutfi believes that this results in women being less of a pressure group for improvements in the conditions and terms of any one activity and therefore women's individual jobs each seem less important, leaving the impression that what women do is less important - in their own eyes as well.

In the Western economy, Nayacakalou (1978) suggests that motivating factors to work include direct wages, the canon of profit maximisation, the ambition of individual wealth accumulation, and the fact that it is an open society in which much depends on economic power for the enhancement of one's position in the social scale. However in the rural Fijian economy, with so little emphasis laid on direct economic reward, he feels motivating factors in work are more difficult to find. The reason, Nayacakalou says, appears to be that motives are largely found in the form of social pressures relating to the role within the group such as social obligations, force of public opinion, group competitiveness (Fijian society lays considerable stress on size as a measure of "greatness") and direct reward.

The current political climate in Fiji is one which emphasizes the value and importance of Fijian custom (Schoeffel,1988). Fijian society values the sharing of resources and frowns on overt competition. Social obligations mean that the more you earn the more you share with your family. Poirine (1995) notes that Pacific Islanders tend to be attracted by entrepreneurship only when they have migrated to a different island where the social obligations are no longer a heavy

burden.

Watters (1969) claims that the Fijians may reach a plateau of production and wants which can be defined as a certain level of consumption goods. Once this target is reached the worker is satisfied and production immediately falls off. This is not conducive to Western work ethics and satisfaction maximisation which drives present economic reasoning.

According to Nayacakalou (1978), when waged labour is undertaken the constitution of working groups is no longer related to kinship factors. In wage labour, there is a demand for sustained effort for a stated number of hours (outside of which no work is done), and there is no social debt incurred in terms of obligations to repay the work done. In Fiji, there is increasing competition for the use of labour between "traditional" incentives and the "money" incentive and this is causing confusion for those caught with double obligations (Nayacakalou,1978).

#### **2.4.1 Access to Employment**

Typically it is men who have greater access to paid employment due to easier mobility (Loutfi,1980). The global trend towards increased employment for women throughout their lifespan requires of governments a commitment to ease the double burden on working women (Ibrahim, 1989). Although Ibrahim claims childcare problems are the most frequently mentioned source of concern, others include work schedules and transportation. Employers, Ibrahim says, expect workers to comply with shift schedules designed for the convenience of production and these often include overtime work during peak production periods.

The increase in the demand for wage employment is affecting the rural lifestyle of many Fijians. In the 1970's and early 1980's, according to Ward, the Fijian village was acting as a social security safety net when the urban sector was failing to provide sufficient new jobs for the growing workforce (Sofer,1993). According to Sofer, wage labour employment, mainly urban, is the major reason for the absence of people in the 15-59 age group from rural villages in Fiji. His research, however, indicates that the contribution of women to this labour mobility pattern is not significant with many women remaining in the village.

Other factors affecting access to formal employment for women include discrimination against women in education, training and hiring (Dixon,1978).

## **2.4.2 Employment Conditions**

Through discussions with factory workers, Hadjicostandi (1990) found that patriarchal relations predominated in the workplace and traditional values and roles were constantly reproduced. Export manufacturers have shown a preference for women workers because they are cheaper to employ, less likely to unionize, and they have greater patience for the tedious, monotonous work involved in the assembly-line production (Safa,1992; Chant and McIlwaine,1995; Loutfi,1980).

Interruptions in the working lives of women (e.g. marriage, having children) significantly affect the consciousness of these women, as they lead to a perception of themselves as temporary transient workers, who therefore tend to "put up" with the conditions within which they work (Rosa,1989). Hadjicostandi (1990) found in discussions held with factory workers about union and political participation, that although they were not indifferent or unaware of their condition, they were not ready to engage in any form of practical resistance. They were more concerned with receiving their wages, suggesting at times, "Let others do the changing. I need my day's wages."

Emberson-Bain and Slatter (1995) argue that the employment laws of Fiji have many unacceptable features which stem from an unequal gender division of labour and the subordinate status of women within society. Prevailing views and beliefs about women and the gender division of labour, they believe, spill over into the public domain of policy and decision-making where they frequently are institutionalised, resulting in an inferior and disempowered status for women within the national economy, on the labour market, and within the decision-making political and social institutions.

## **2.4.3 Men's Reproductive Role**

Watters (1969) asserts that in Fiji the role of men and women is not often interchangeable. Male waged labour involves a rearrangement of tasks within the traditional division of labour and undermines traditional bases of authority over labour (Nayacakalou,1978). This also applies to women's employment but is especially important as men are often reluctant to assume household and childcare duties.

In her study of Greek women working in a garment factory, Hadjicostandi (1990) reported that in many families the men did a limited range of housework. Miralao (1984) found in her study of working women in the Philippines that when men participate in female household tasks, they appear more willing to help with cooking and preparing meals, taking care of children and marketing.

Women in both studies viewed these activities as "help" rather than taking over the chores. Typically, says Hadjicostandi (1990), the husband helped when the wife did not "feel well" or was "very tired" or had a heavy task to accomplish. Thus although they "helped out", the men as a group did not assume any real responsibility for what was still viewed as "womens' work". Hadjicostandi concludes that this resulted in married women having to combine their paid labour with domestic work and childcare.

## **2.5 Formal Employment for Women: Factors Influencing Changes in Gender Roles**

### **2.5.1 Economic Necessity**

In many developing countries structural adjustment has meant an increase in the cost of living (UN,1994). Women are faced with coping with increases in food, education and health care costs and have had to become economically active.

The incentive to work is apparently already strong enough to override cultural constraints and the financial motive for women working becomes even more pressing in times of personal, community or national crises (eg. poor harvests, war, inflation) (Dixon,1978). Hadjicostandi (1990) found that women saw waged work as an "unavoidable" but "temporary" necessity that would benefit their family in the future, or improve the family's current standard of living. Formal employment represents an opportunity for increased job security for women as often they are faced with employment options viewed as supplemental or temporary.

### **2.5.2 Prestige**

One major non-economic incentive to outside employment is prestige, although most of the jobs available to rural women would tend to reduce prestige rather than enhance it. In some developing countries it is more prestigious to keep women in the home and because it is

predominantly low-income women who work outside the home, female employment becomes identified as a low status activity (Dixon,1978). Nevertheless, despite the poor work conditions and degradation of some industrial and agricultural jobs, formal sector opportunities are perceived by women themselves as desirable alternatives to the options available to them in domestic service or the informal sector (Ibrahim,1989).

The ILO (1985) also suggested that women may become more desirable marriage partners when they are employed. In instances where wage labour is scarce, women's employment is a way of ensuring an income for the household. It is also not necessarily disruptive for women to earn more than men, or for men to earn nothing at all, especially if it is recognised that this is due to a weak male labour market rather than to individual failure (ILO,1985).

### **2.5.3 Companionship**

Dixon (1978) considers women's desire to meet other women outside the home as another motive for seeking employment. The onerous nature of women's traditional confinement within the home and family causes them to appreciate greatly the independence and experience that wage employment affords for an at least temporary escape from such confinement, and therefore to accept the terms and conditions on which such employment is offered (Foo and Lim,1989). Although one would expect that working outside the household would increase women's interactions with other individuals, thus affecting their attitudes, Hadjicostandi (1990) found that this held true for very few of the factory workers. Tight control over the women in the workplace, as a technique for meeting production norms, allows for very little interaction.

## **2.6 Impact of Womens' Formal Employment on the Household and Community**

### **2.6.1 Income Distribution**

Women contribute proportionately more of their income to the household and withhold less for personal use than men and therefore their income has a more positive effect on the welfare of the family (Buvinic,1995; Mencher,1988; UNPF,1995). Dixon (1978) is concerned about the potential positive impact of female employment on the distribution of resources within the family, especially as it affects the inequalities between men and women, boys and girls. The extent to which the income-earning capacity of adult women brings about a more egalitarian

investment between sons and daughters in schooling, food, and medical care is, according to Dixon, a crucial aspect of this distributional component of development.

Profits from women's income-producing projects are also more likely to be used to improve community welfare (UNPF,1995). Thus a community's initial resistance to employment for women will decrease as women become more successful and the community begins to benefit visibly by the increase in income, and in the outcomes from women acquiring new skills (Dixon,1978).

### **2.6.2 Household Decision-making: Bargaining Power**

Outside earnings can give women a stronger position in the household, possibly a clearer perception of her individuality and well-being and a higher "perceived contribution" to the family's economic position (Sen,1990). According to Dixon (1978), employment for women appears to increase women's bargaining power in the family by providing a cash income over which they might have some control. At the very least, Dixon suggests, the employment provides concrete public and private recognition of the value of women's work.

One of the principal criticisms of employment programmes for women, Moser (1993) contends, is that since they have the potential to modify the gender division of labour within the household, this may also imply changes in the balance of power between men and women within the family. The ILO (1995), and Miralao (1984), maintain that in all settings joint husband-wife decision-making is the most common form of family decision-making and as women work, their relative power and authority increase.

Nevertheless, the employment of women, even under conditions where this is defined as an extension of their traditional wife-helpmate roles, may plant the seeds of role conflict that in time may demand adjustments in gender relations, and loosen strict adherence to the traditional division of labour between the sexes (Miralao,1984). Whilst in the community women are devalued to the extent that they are offered less money than men for the same or similar work, within the family they are valued in the same way as a male earner in the sense that her contribution is taken seriously (Desai and Jain,1994).

Husbands frequently under-value the economic contribution of women's income to the household

(Roldan,1988 cited in Moser,1993). It is now widely accepted that not all household resources are automatically pooled and that women typically devote more of their income, and of the income under their control, to meeting basic family needs than do men (Loutfi,1987). The normative expectations that their husband will control their income also often influence women to surrender their control of their income (Moser,1993). Where joint accounts are held, Omari (1995) found that quarrels frequently centre around the husband withdrawing money without the knowledge of his wife and using it in ways which do not help the development and general welfare of the members of the unit.

Mencher (1988) found that in many households it is the wife who handles the family's finances. However, she also says that if the husband asks for money for personal use the wife is generally not free to refuse or it may result in her being beaten.

### **2.6.3 Child Health and Care**

Stephens (1994) notes that as increasing numbers of women join the paid workforce there is rarely a concomitant sharing of domestic responsibility by men, so a "working woman's" work day is simply lengthened, sometimes to intolerable levels. The fact that paid and unpaid work are competing for women's time has important impacts on children, on women themselves, and on the disintegration of the household (Moser,1993).

Stephens maintains that employers are reluctant to concede much to motherhood, expecting women employees to make necessary arrangements for child care away from the work site, and resenting any demands made on them when these impinges on work. "Women's components", says Moser, such as crèche facilities, or extra training, are necessary to ensure that women gain access to employment on equal terms with men. But Stephens (1994) claims that in market-led economies, policies on crèches and child care in the work place emerge only under intense pressure from women, or as employers are forced to consider such measures when alternative labour supplies dry up.

Buvinic (1995) holds that until fairly recently the prevailing assumption was that any positive income effect of women's employment on children's health and well-being would be offset by negative effects of reduced child care time by working mothers, or by the substitution of older

siblings in child care. However Desai and Jain (1994) argue that irrespective of women's level of participation in economic activity, rural women in poor areas rarely have time to be the sole caretakers of their children and that other family members are regularly used to help with child care.

Generally, Senauer (1990) alleges, as employment opportunities for women expand and their education levels rise, the value of women's time is likely to play an increasingly important role in the determination of worldwide food consumption patterns. It will be economically rational, he declares, for households to shift away from traditional foods which require time-intensive preparation to less time-intensive foods. In some situations this shift could have unfortunate nutritional consequences as the more processed, time-saving foods are likely to be more expensive than traditional foods and, unless food expenditures increase sufficiently, the nutritional quality of the diet may suffer.

However recent studies actually indicate a positive effect of women's employment on child health and nutrition (Buvinic,1995; Senauer,1990). Buvinic (1995) cites an example in Brazil, where income in the hands of the mother has an effect on child health that is 20 per cent more positive than income that is controlled by the father. She claims that women prefer to invest meagre earnings on child well-being and underscores the point that the income that poor women earn can yield higher social benefits than income earned by men. Senauer suggests both mothers' and fathers' education levels also have a positive impact on their children's long run nutritional status.

#### **2.6.4 Family Planning**

While access to education and employment appears to have decreased female fertility, it is clear that men and women have different interests in children. Moser (1993) believes women may continue to want more children for both economic and social reasons relating to the power, status and prestige that comes from motherhood. However, an evaluation of 13 women's group enterprises in Kenya found no predictable relationship between income generation and family planning acceptance (McCormack et al,1986 cited in Buvinic,1989).

## 2.7 Summary

It is clear that formal employment is important to the economic growth in developing countries. However women's ability to contribute successfully to the productive labour supply of a country is hindered by the traditional gender roles they are expected to play.

Women in Fiji face a situation similar to women in other developing countries with wage employment a relatively new opportunity for women at the village-level. Their heavy workload and lack of access to, and control over, resources means they are often marginalised by the development process and this can be exacerbated by formal employment.

With employment, the status of women does not appear to increase either at the household or community level as much as was originally anticipated by development experts. Working women still lack equal power and opportunity in decision-making at both levels.

## **Chapter 3. The Case Study Approach and Data Collection**

### **3.1 Introduction**

As described in Masini and Stratigos (1991), in order to analyze changes in relationships both within the household, and between the household and the rest of the community, research should focus on the roles, activities, and status of women in their domestic, cultural and community contexts. The aspects which were examined and described in order to assess whether formal employment for women leads to an improved quality of life for women and their households in the Fijian rural context are:

- (a) the gender division of labour,
- (b) gender-related access and control over resources and services,
- (c) the benefits and problems arising from formal employment for women,
- (d) factors affecting changes to the division of labour.

Information gathering occurred over November/December 1995 and included time at the village as well as in Suva, the capital of Fiji.

### **3.2 Units Of Analysis**

Households were selected according to gendered employment criteria and were analyzed using the Harvard Analytical Framework (See Section 3.4) as the basis for a gender analysis. Analyses were also carried-out at individual and village levels.

The groupings for the households were based on information gathered in a previous visit to the village in August 1995. Households were grouped according to a combination of gender and employment status in order to focus on the effects of the women working outside the village. While the majority of those working outside the village worked at PAFCO there were a few employed in other occupations. The household groupings were:

- (a) only a woman worked outside the village<sup>2</sup>,
- (b) only a man worked outside the village,
- (c) both worked outside the village,
- (d) no one worked outside the village.

The household unit is a convenient, culturally accepted and relatively easy unit to use. However a number of issues associated with the use of the household need to be considered. The definition of a household varies greatly amongst different communities. Grandin (1988) defines the household as "a group of people (normally related) who live together and eat from the same pot". The implication is that members of the household share resources, tasks of production and share in the consumption of what the household produces. In this context the household in rural Fiji is not easily defined as meals are often shared with others. Both family and friends who do not live at the house, and family members (especially children), may go and stay at relatives or friends for extended periods of time for varying reasons.

The benefits of development are often directed at the household in the belief that they will be equally shared amongst members of the household. Frequently the household head is expected to make decisions which would benefit the household as a whole. However, treating the household as an undifferentiated unit will mask the roles of different decision-makers and actors, the constraints they face, or their contribution to household and individual food security (Gittinger,1990).

Cultural, traditional and family circumstances determine who decides how household income is used and for what purposes (Folbre,1986). Women who are employed do not necessarily benefit unless they have control of the income earned. Folbre alleges that if decisions are made inequitably within the household the level of living and nutritional standards may vary considerably between members of the household.

The problems identified in the study clearly indicated it was necessary to look within the household to see how benefits are both distributed and controlled, and problems resolved

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<sup>2</sup> The workers at PAFCO are grouped into three categories by the factory management. These are permanent, temporary and casual. The first two categories were included as people who work outside the village. Casuals were classed as not working outside the village as, according to PAFCO, they were only required to work at busy times. (Unfortunately, this later proved to not always be correct and there were instances of women classed as casual working almost every day.) This was done as almost every household had someone who worked at least casually at the factory.

amongst members of the household.

### **3.3 Harvard Analytical Framework**

The Harvard Analytical Framework for gender analysis was the basis of the methods used.

The framework was developed at the Harvard Institute of International Development in collaboration with the Women in Development Office of USAID and has become a popular approach with development agencies. It is a set of topics which concentrates on identifying gender-based divisions in productive and reproductive labour, and gender differences in access and control over income and resources.

The framework can be adapted to suit different situations and provides important data on the distribution of roles and resources within the household. The systematic enquiry into men's and women's activities attempts to overcome the ideologies and stereotypes that render women's work invisible (Razavi and Miller, 1995).

Razavi and Miller (1995) criticize the framework because it treats the gender division of labour as a relationship of separation. Although the division involves men and women undertaking different activities, they argue that it also entails an intricate and changing system of co-operation and exchange which is potentially conflicting. The division of responsibilities between men and women tends to move between the two according to each sex's ability to cope with their own roles and their ability to shift responsibilities.

Within the parameters of this research, the relations between men and women are examined in terms of the household, village, island and Fijian economy. The framework was extended to consider the interdependence between women and men within the household.

#### **3.3.1 Indicators**

Different indicators were used to assess the impact on the situation of the women and the household. Those selected as being relevant were:

- (a) income level,
- (b) type of bank account,

- (c) loan and savings status,
- (d) division of household labour,
- (e) division of community labour,
- (f) highest educational level attained,
- (g) marital status,
- (h) employment status,
- (i) number, age and gender of adults and children in the household,
- (j) type of household,
- (i) housing materials,
- (j) household amenities.

Similar indicators have been used in previous studies identified in the literature.<sup>3</sup> Importantly, the indicators were able to be obtained by the sole researcher.

Possessions, such as quality housing or transportation, may be more universally applicable indicators of economic status (Rogers, 1989). Rogers suggests that there are several advantages to using assets or wealth indicators to assess economic status as, in general, they are readily observable and an interviewer, or even an extension agent, can readily observe whether a house is constructed of mud, brick or cement, whether the roof is metal or thatch, whether there is a refrigerator in the house and so on. Questions about ownership are also simple and concrete, even when assets are not readily observable (e.g. radios). Another advantage of using assets as an indicator, states Rogers (1989), is that ownership is much more stable over time than income and therefore changes in ownership reflect relatively longer term shifts in economic status.

### **3.4 Data Collection**

#### **3.4.1 Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) Techniques**

The use of rapid rural appraisal and participatory rural appraisal techniques were selected as the best options available for gathering the information because of the qualitative nature of the research and the flexibility of the methods.

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<sup>3</sup> See Gianotten et al (1994), Adagala (1991), Hale (1987), Wolf (1986) and Indirarevi (1987)

Chambers (1994) believes RRA and PRA are closely linked, with RRA more likely used to elicit and extract information by outsiders as part of a process of data gathering. The shared principles of RRA/PRA, states Chambers (1994a, page 1254), include:

*"learning directly from the local people, learning rapidly and progressively, offsetting biases, optimising trade-offs, triangulating and seeking diversity."*

The RRA/PRA techniques identified by Chambers (1994, pages 959-961) and used in this research included:

- (a) *secondary sources - such as files, reports, maps, articles and books,*
- (b) *semi-structured interviews - which can entail having a written or mental checklist, but being open-ended enabling following up on the unexpected,*
- (c) *key informants - which involves enquiring about and selecting experts within the community to be interviewed,*
- (d) *group discussions - using casual and community groups,*
- (e) *do-it-yourself approaches - involving the researcher asking to be taught, being taught and performing village tasks,*
- (f) *participatory mapping - where the local people use the ground, floor or paper to make social, demographic, health, natural resource maps,*
- (g) *transect walks - entail walking with or by local people through an area, observing, asking, listening, discussing and identifying different zones, crops, soils, lands etc.,*
- (h) *daily time use analysis - comprises indicating relative amounts of time, degrees of drudgery etc. of activities,*
- (i) *analysis of difference - includes gender, social group, wealth/poverty, occupation and*

*age analyses,*

- (j) key probes - entails asking questions which can lead direct to key issues,*
- (k) stories - such as household histories and profiles are used to describe issues.*

General information regarding the house construction materials, electricity, running internal water supply were obtained through participatory mapping techniques using two people from the village. The total number of houses and total population were also mapped. The village was larger and more densely populated than was anticipated.

### **3.4.2 Interviews**

Open-ended guided interviews were conducted in the homes of the women and men. The tone was kept conversational and relaxed.

Notes were taken rather than recording the interviews as it was observed that some people were nervous in a recording situation. The interviews varied in length between 30 and 90 minutes and as the information gathered increased the interviews became more structured and shorter. All the interviewees spoke English to varying levels.

Most of the interviews took place in the mornings as this was when it was cooler and there was a greater chance of the women being available. The working women were interviewed at the weekend and during time off when the factory was closed. It was not appropriate to speak to them in the evenings as they were tired, did not feel like talking, or were busy with reproductive duties.

### **3.4.3 Selection of Households**

Selection depended on the ability of the interviewees to speak English and their availability to be interviewed.



**Table 1: Household Grouping by Employment**

<b>Household Type</b>	<b>Number of HH in Village</b>	<b>Percentage of Total HH in Village</b>	<b>Number of HH Interviewed</b>
Only a woman works outside the village	28	35%	10
Only a man works outside the village	7	9%	2
Two or more people work outside the village	14	17%	4
No one works outside the village	33	39%	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>22</b>

**Key:** HH = Households

Households were selected by the Turaga Ni Koro and his wife following the description of the study groupings supplied to them. Households where there was a woman only working outside the village were interviewed in greater numbers as it became apparent that they had been affected the most by the changes in the village.

Due to time constraints, mainly women were interviewed. In four households the men were interviewed as well as the women.<sup>4</sup> There were just seven households where the man only was employed outside the village and two of these were interviewed. See Table 1 for the number of households and their employment situation.

#### **3.4.4 Analysis of Data**

Triangulation was used to cross check information gathered. Different methods of data collection involving different people, times and investigators were used to do this. In the evenings, after reviewing the information gathered that day, any conclusions reached were discussed with key informants in the village to ensure that they were valid and the understanding of the situation was correct. If not, then more information was sought to rectify this.

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<sup>4</sup> There were obvious discrepancies observed in the information supplied by some of the men.

### **3.5 Limitations**

A number of limitations were identified as having an impact on the research.

- (a) The interviewer was a foreign male from a different culture who did not speak Fijian. - This affected the information gathered from the women. This was partially offset by the presence of the interviewer's spouse for the first week in the village.
- (b) Time. - The preparation time available prior to undertaking the fieldwork should have been greater resulting in organisational problems which affected the amount and quality of data able to be collected.
- (c) Living in the village. - This brought limited time for independent review of the day's research. It was difficult to be objective as the interviewer became emotionally attached to the people.
- (d) No introduction by an authority figure. - It was hoped that an officer from UNIFEM could have introduced the researcher to the villagers and helped to describe the purpose of the research. This increased the amount of time the researcher needed to become more comfortable and to explain the reason for the research, and how it was to be used.
- (e) Only one village assessed. - The resources available were not sufficient to allow other villages to be assessed. However, some comparison with the neighbouring village of Tokou was able to be made during a number of brief visits.
- (f) Access to the working women. - This proved to be a major obstacle until the final few days. The women working at the factory are subject to long tiring days working under difficult conditions. This made for limited opportunities to interview the women at any length. Their weekends were taken up by household duties or by community obligations.

The limitations emphasizes the need for a flexible and rapid qualitative method of data collection. It also highlights areas of bias which may have occurred in the project. By acknowledging these limitations, the reason for the approach used is clear.

## Chapter 4. Gender Analysis: The Division of Labour

### 4.1 The Village of Natokalau:

In 1986 there were 295 people living in 58 houses in Natokalau with an average size of 5.1 people per household (Bureau of Statistics,1986). Natokalau was the third largest settlement on the island after Levuka and the neighbouring village of Tokou. In December 1995 there were 82 completed houses in the village with a total population of approximately 406 people. The average household size was 4.9 persons per household. This is slightly less than the average of 5.3 for rural Fijian households (MFA,1995).

Population in the village grew at an average of 3.8 per cent per year between 1986 and 1995. This compares with an average national annual growth rate of 2.3 per cent for indigenous Fijians during the same period (King and Fallon,1995).

The people in Natokalau are from two related *yavusa* (Bolabola,1986). There are six *mataqali* in the village of varying sizes with the smallest only having two houses. Four *mataqali*, owning 162 hectares form one *yavusa*, and two *mataqali*, owning just 14 hectares are the other (Bolabola,1986). One male elder from each *mataqali* is on the village council presided over by the chief of the village.

The village can be described as Christian with the majority of people being Methodists. Other denominations are also represented (Catholics, Seventh Day Adventists, Assembly of God, Every Home, Jehovahs Witness and United Pentecostal).

The water supply comes from a tank on the surrounding hills fed by a small river. The village has its own carrier for transport, operated by one of the villagers. The village is connected to the Fiji Electric Authority and the telephone company. The main form of waste disposal is a pit on the edge of the village with sewerage confined to septic tanks. Bolabola (1986) describes one small wooden cooperative store. In December 1995 there were four more private stores operating as well as the cooperative store. Most of the houses are made of concrete blocks<sup>5</sup> with few *bures* seen. Only one Natokalau family has settled on leased land about 1.5 km from the

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<sup>5</sup> Four more concrete block houses are under construction.

village.

Natokalau village owns approximately 176 hectares of land (Bolabola,1986). Ovalau Island is divided into 4 agricultural zones by the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) to identify the different farming areas and the crops that can be grown successfully. Natokalau is in Zone 1, a cassava and vegetable growing area. According to the SAO in Levuka, Natokalau supplies (along with the other villages in the zone) the township, hotels, resorts, schools and another two islands with vegetables throughout the year.

## **4.2 Division of Labour**

There is a concerted effort amongst the people in the village to retain their traditional way of life. This includes holding traditional gender roles where reproductive duties are regarded as "natural" to women. But there are circumstances where this can not occur due to employment outside the village.

Any assumption that employment may raise status carries with it the implication that domestic work, traditionally performed by women, has lower status (Hale,1987). Hale contends that this combined with men being concerned with protecting their authority and status over women, means they will resist taking a larger share in the domestic workload, particularly if it also means a decline in male leisure time (See Section 4.3.4).

### **4.2.1 Women's Formal Employment in Natokalau**

Of the 930 women registered to work at PAFCO, currently there are 68 women from Natokalau. These are divided into 3 categories<sup>6</sup>:

- (a) Permanent status - 24
- (b) Temporary status - 24
- (c) Casuals - 20

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<sup>6</sup>The different classifications of workers are very confusing, but they enable the factory to overcome seasonal variations in fish supply by laying off workers as required. Casual workers can also be subject to a week on/week off rota system between villages (Emberson-Bain,1994a). As noted by Emberson-Bain (1994a) fringe benefits for temporary and casual workers are also less.

The factory can hire women from 16 years of age but 18 year olds and greater are preferred. The factory Personnel Officer also stated that there is no preference for married or single women so long as they are able to endure working the 8.5 hours per day in the factory.

Malani (1991) found in her survey at PAFCO that the ages of the working women range from 17-50 years, with only about two per cent 45 and over. Seventy eight per cent of the respondents were either married or in a de facto relationship and twenty two per cent single. The women interviewed in this study had ages ranging from 22-54 years old. Only four of the women were single.

In Table 1 (Section 3.5.3), villagers who regularly work outside the village were identified using participatory mapping techniques. Of the total households in the village, 61 per cent had one or more persons formally employed outside the village, and 35 per cent had only a woman from the household working outside the village.

Only 9 per cent of households had only men working outside the village.

Hale (1987) maintained that in India it was the women who were less able than the men to accept employment opportunities outside the village due to their already substantial domestic workload.

The division of labour between men, women and children in the households is influenced by the employment status of the women/men, the number in the household, the ratio of women to men, the number and gender of children, whether they are at school and the ages of the members of the household.

Households were observed in the following three modes.

- (a) When the factory was operating and women were working during the day and the children were at school.
- (b) When the women were working and the children were on school holidays (an observed difference was the increase in the work level of the girls in the household while the mother was working).

- (c) When the women were not working and the children were on school holidays (any household activities which were completed by the men appeared to become the responsibility of the women during this period. This reinforced the view that the women are responsible for the reproductive duties even though they work.).

Table 2 indicates the allocation of productive and reproductive duties in the interviewed households during the period where the factory is operating normally and the children are at school. This is a simplified version of the complex interaction occurring at the household level within the village.

### **4.3 Workload**

#### **4.3.1 Women<sup>7</sup>**

All the working women interviewed described their day at the factory as long, hot and tiring.<sup>8</sup> The women are involved at the factory for at least 10 and a half hours a day including travel time to and from the factory. This is for a normal 8.5 hour working day and does not include overtime which is regularly worked by some of the women.

If a woman is not employed then she is normally required to look after her own children or those of a relative, or both. She is also responsible for the washing, preparation and cooking of meals and cleaning the house and compound. Fishing, gathering wood and other income generating activities may also be included. Washing, food preparation and cooking, and childcare were observed as the major time consuming tasks for those women not formally employed.

The heavy burden of work the women were subjected to was reflected in the large number of comments where women expressed tiredness and exhaustion in the evenings, along with a desire to go to bed early. There were also comments made about rising earlier in order to make the day longer to complete the household tasks the women were responsible for.

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<sup>7</sup> Hale (1987) states that it is important to recognize women are not a unitary group and are often divided along class lines. Class lines were not able to be defined by the researcher in Natokalau.

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix 2 for a description of a day for women working at the factory.

**Table 2: Interviewed Households: Division of Labour**

Household	Type (Size)	Cooking	Washing	Cleaning	Childcare	Gardening	Paid Emp
One	N (5)	Wife/(Husband)	Wife	Wife	Wife	Husband	Wife
Two	E (7)	GMother/Vieme (Irieta)	Irieta/Vieme	Irieta/ GMother	GMother	Brotherinlaw	Irieta
Three	N (9)	Wife/(Husband)	Wife (Husband/ Children)	Wife (Children)	Older Children	Husband	Wife
Four	N (5)	Wife/(Husband)	Wife (Husband)	Wife (Husband)	Husband	Husband	Wife
Five	N (4)	Wife/(Husband)	Wife	Wife (Husband)	GMother/ (Husband)	Husband	Wife
Six	N (8)	Wife/(Husband)	Wife	Wife (Husband)	GMother/ (Husband/ Wife)	Husband	Wife
Seven	N (6)	Wife/Husband	Wife	Wife	GMother	Husband	Wife
Eight	E (9)	Niece	Wife	Niece	Niece	Husband	Wife
Nine	E (4)	Tarusila	Tarusila	Tarusila		Children	Tarusila
Ten	N (5)	Wife/(Husband)	Wife (Husband)	Wife (Husband)	GMother (Husband/ Wife)	Husband	Wife
Eleven	E (3)	Wife	Wife	Wife		Son	Husband
Twelve	E (7)	Vieme	Vieme	Vieme	Vieme	Brotherinlaw	Husband
Thirteen	E (7)	GMother/ (GFather)	Elena	GMother/ Children	Shared	Brothers/ Father	Elena/ Brother
Fourteen	N (3)	Wife	Wife	Wife	Sisterinlaw	Brotherinlaw	Husband/ Wife
Fifteen	N (6)	Wife	Wife	Wife	Older Children	Husband/(Wife) (Children)	Wife/ Husband
Sixteen	E (4)	Mother/Sister/ Niece	Mother/ Sister/ Niece	Mother/ Sister/ Niece		Brother	Sister/ Brother
Seventeen	N (3)	Wife/(Husband)	Wife	Wife (Husband)	Wife	Husband (Wife)	Husband Wife
Eighteen	N (2)	Wife	Wife	Wife		Husband	
Nineteen	N (5)	Wife/(Husband)	Wife	Wife	Wife	Husband	
Twenty	N (8)	Wife/(Husband)	Wife	Wife/ (Husband)	Wife	Husband	
Twenty One	E (7)	Wife	Wife	Wife	Wife	Husband (Wife)	Husband/ Wife
Twenty Two	N (6)	Wife	Wife	Wife	Wife	Husband	Husband

Key: E = Extended Family; N = Nuclear Family. (Brackets indicate person helps with task.); Emp = Employment

The constantly changing labour supply in the household due to school holidays, casual labour requirements and lay-offs at the factory makes it difficult to establish routines. Permanent changes to traditional gender roles are difficult to maintain as household members were observed to revert to traditional roles whenever possible.

#### 4.3.2 Men

In Table 2, seven men were credited with helping out in two or more of the reproductive activities analyzed. Two of these men were from households where their wife did not work more than casually at the factory. Hale (1987) claims that employed women were consistently more likely to claim that their husbands would help across all household structures.

Men who are not employed at PAFCO spend their day in the family garden. The amount of time spent there varies with individuals. The income required for the family, whether their wife was at home, and their interest in the garden were all identified as positive influences. A working wife, drinking *kava* the previous night and the distance to the garden were identified as negative influences.

While the men may work hard in the garden they have a flexible working schedule. Villagers, both men and women, commented that some men work less now that the women are working. One man described how some men even joke about it at *grog* sessions.

Due to the coolness villagers mentioned that it was better to work in the garden in the early morning, but some men stayed up late drinking *grog* and lay asleep until midday. Alternatively, some that rose early slept in the afternoon either at home or in the garden. One man related how he and others lay in the shade and slept or drank coconut milk after a working period.

One person suggested that non-employed women have husbands who go to the garden more often as they needed the garden income. Also their wives encouraged them.

The village is regarded as an easy and "idyllic" way of life. A villager also remarked:

*"When others try to get ahead, people ask why do you have to get ahead? What is wrong?"*

This attitude often comes from men who joke about those who work hard. Consequently peer pressure prevents some from working longer hours.

#### **4.3.3 Children**

Women and their daughters are traditionally responsible for all reproductive tasks with the eldest daughter helping most around the house. Women, and especially the working women, depend on their daughters and family for support in completing household duties.

On weekends children normally go to collect coconuts, firewood or help in other food gathering activities. Children increased their reproductive duties during the school holidays. Girls were the main providers of assistance and were observed helping with food preparation, cooking and child care. Boys are less likely to have household chores but may accompany their fathers to the garden. This reinforces the gender roles performed in the village.

#### **4.3.4 Leisure**

Although a woman may be formally employed, when at home she is expected to assume her traditional role and undertake reproductive duties. This leaves women with very little leisure time. Moments to chat are snatched in the evening and at weekends while performing other tasks like washing. Women were observed relaxing mainly on Sunday afternoons but still looked after the children. Sunday church services also took up large parts of their available leisure time (See Section 4.3.6)

Both men and womens' recreation activities observed included drinking *grog*, playing sport (especially volleyball), cards, watching videos, listening to music, reading, talking and visiting friends/relatives.

Due to less being produced in the garden, there has been an increase in leisure time for the men rather than a proportional redistribution of reproductive tasks (Pers. Comm., SAO, Levuka). The men's flexible work day allows them access to more leisure time than the working women who are restricted to leisure time outside their working hours.

#### **4.3.5 Community Work**

The absence of people from the village during the day leaves smaller numbers to perform community tasks which were undertaken on Thursday mornings by the men. Prior to being employed the women would clear up in the afternoon following the community action.

Due to employment and other obligations, and because it is no longer socially compulsory, the total number of men working on village projects has declined. One person estimated that only around 30 per cent of the men do community work now despite there being an increasing need due to the larger population. As the work is unpaid, one person suggested that:

*"it is unfair that those who are able to work are no longer responsible for these tasks, for which they also receive the benefits."*

At important community events or celebrations the men are responsible for the preparation and cooking of food in a *lovo*, though women also prepare other food for the occasion. Women are also responsible for serving the meal, keeping flies away, providing service for the elders and church officials and cleaning up afterwards. The women do this in turn.

#### **4.3.6 Religion**

The Christian church plays a major part in the lives of the villagers. Most are Methodists and there is a well-maintained Methodist church which has two Methodist services on Sundays (10.00 am and 4.00 pm.) Services take between one to two hours. Whilst it is not compulsory many go to both services especially those involved in the choir which also practices regularly, both during the week and after the service.

#### **4.4 Reproductive Activities**

Cooking and food preparation, which was observed to be the most time consuming reproductive duty, remain largely the responsibility of women. This task has increased due to having three meals a day. Breakfast and lunch were still mostly prepared by the women.

However, cooking was also the area most likely for a man to help (according to the interviewees). Table 2 shows ten of the twenty two women interviewed claimed a man in the household would help with cooking particularly where illness, working overtime, tiredness or some other absence makes it a necessity.

Women are almost exclusively responsible for the washing in the household. Only three women claimed men helped with the washing while others mentioned men helped rarely (Table 2).

People in the village take considerable pride in their appearance and this is most obvious on Sundays when they dress formally for church. Clothes are often changed (especially before eating meals) as the climate is hot and humid. Most households do not have large supplies of clothes and this necessitates washing at regular intervals.

Washing takes up times ranging from 30 to 180 minutes. Washing machines are rare necessitating hand washing. Working women wash in the evenings, early mornings, or the weekends, or rely on children or another female relative.

Whenever men are involved, it is at a personal level by washing their own clothes and not those for all the household. Hale (1987) confirms this from her research. Cultural obligations also affect men's involvement with washing. One woman commented that:

*"it is not "right" for men to wash others' clothes, especially those of women and children, as it would not look good."*

Women are held responsible for cleaning the house, though seven men in the interviewed households were credited as helping. Again men help only when the women can not complete the tasks.

The working women usually perform this duty in the early morning before work, or when men are out of the house. Often husbands may not realise the extent of this task.

Hale (1987) insists that the care and accommodation of children is a major consideration in the viability of employment for women. Malani (1991) found that when the majority of villagers are working at the factory, child care is performed by grandparents (55 per cent), husbands (25 per

cent), and other relatives (5 per cent). Ten per cent of those working had all the children at school.

Whatever the arrangements, the working women still claimed to carry the ultimate responsibility for the well-being of the children. Some mentioned staying home from work when a child was ill to ensure that they were looked after. Hale (1987) found in her research that employed women were more likely to claim that their husbands were prepared to help with child care than non-working housewives. The extent of the help varied and was rarely described as a major contribution.

In the Natokalau survey, three men helped out with childcare with only one woman claiming her husband was responsible for childcare while she was at work. When the casual women are required at the factory more husbands have to remain at home thus affecting their crops.

Men are reluctant child carers as this is traditionally considered a women's job. This is reinforced by the church. One woman commented that:

*"The men can not look after the children (especially the infants) and children get sick because the men are left to do it. They get sick because they are not getting good food. Fijians are lucky because they have either a sister or mother at home to look after the kids."*

In most other instances it was another female relative who undertook childcare duties. Older women are also required to perform childcare while mothers are at work. This is placing a heavier workload on these women and restricting them in their other activities such as fishing and handicrafts.

Children are not supervised as closely as they would be in a western society. Many of the younger children look after themselves or are minded by an older child. Girls more often look after the youngest children, though one family depends on their oldest son to look after the younger children even though this means he misses school.

## 4.5 Productive Activities

### 4.5.1 Agriculture

Agricultural activities are almost exclusively carried out by men, though one family suggested that the family all went to the garden when required. One person commented that:

*"the gardening should be left to the men in order for the men to retain their respect by making this important contribution to the household."*

From Table 2 it is clear only three women claimed to help in the garden. Given the large number of the women at work, their participation in agriculture is severely limited. Many of the women interviewed were not aware of what their husband grew in their garden apart from basic root crops such as *cassava*, *dalo* and *yaqona*. One woman said she had never been to their family garden even though it was only thirty minutes walk away.

Women with no other source are supplied with vegetables from a male member of the extended family. This included brothers, brothers-in-law and fathers. Alternative approaches to traditional agriculture are also being adopted by different households. One working woman described making a small garden in the village to provide the household with easily accessible food.

The move to cash cropping has seen an increase in the area of land used with the cash meeting new consumption needs (Ward,1994). However Ward asserts that when the cash is used to buy food the amount is less than if root crops were grown on the same land. Also, in a market-based economy farmers may face financial loss if harvesting and marketing is disrupted by social obligations imposed by the village or kin group (Ward,1994).

With increasing employment, the labour demanding subsistence crops have declined in importance, as have those which were grown primarily as insurance against times of hunger (eg yams) (Ward,1994). Local food production in Fiji has declined with the 1989 level being only 80 per cent of that in 1979-81 (DWC,1994).

The Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) is keen to develop the flat land available to the Natokalau farmers. MAFF, however, can only attempt to organise small projects with the farming community as casual workers go to the factory and leave their crops unattended and machinery is needed to increase production. MAFF has a tractor which farmers can, in theory, hire, but it has not been working since 1992 as funds to fix it are not available. In the meantime the men are reluctant to revert to manual means of cultivation and have reduced the area under production (Pers. Comm. SAO, Levuka).

One of the biggest gardens in the village consisted of tomatoes, *yaqona*, *dalo*, *cassava*, cucumbers, papaya, carrots, beans, chilies, bananas and cocoa. This family sell the produce both in the village and in Levuka. Doubt was cast by this farmer about the profitability of further increasing the amount of crops grown due to the small size of the market available on the island.

Livestock care, mainly pigs, is male dominated. Only one family, who live outside the main village area, have cows and horses. The men are responsible for feeding and looking after the pigs, kept close to the outskirts of the village, which are either used for meat during celebrations, or sold.

#### **4.5.2 Income Generation: Cottage Industry**

Cottage industries are a source of income for women, mainly, who do not have a regular factory or outside income. Coconut oil, baking, mat making and bead making were mentioned as ways of increasing income. They could be sold in the village or at the factory on Friday (pay day) with incomes of up to \$30 dollars a week possible. This is a considerable amount compared to overall income levels (See Section 4.6.2).

Mats are required for ceremonies and presents. Large mats are in fact easier to make than small ones (worth \$50-\$70), taking a week. However few young women were observed undertaking these tasks which are time consuming but an important source of income. The Manager of the Westpac Bank suggested that the substitute of money for traditional gifts may also be a factor in a decline of craft work.

There has been a community shop run by the village for a number of years but recently there has been a rapid rise in the number of shops reflecting the increasing disposable income and the growing demand for consumer goods. Shops are an alternative source of income for households which are mainly run by women as it allows them to look after the children.

#### **4.6 Access and Control of Resources**

##### **4.6.1 Land and the Environment**

Land is managed and controlled by the men<sup>9</sup> but many of those interviewed felt that the farming resources were not being utilised to their potential. This is the responsibility of the men who could now be regarded as potentially "untapped resources" as the women once were. The Methodist Church urged the men to produce more crops to increase their income and regain their self respect.

Women, especially working women, are less involved in the management of the environment, fishing, gardening and food gathering since employment opportunities have increased. A number of people commented that Natokalau used to be the cleanest village on the island and that this standard had declined since the women started work. The neighbouring village of Tokou appeared to be in a similar state as Natokalau.

Families are responsible for keeping their own compound clean. Women are thought to be more conscious of the environment and they are responsible for cleaning up the compound around their house. Where this was previously a daily activity, working women now do it once or twice a week, or when they are able. Some households who can afford it pay others to clean up for them.

Men and women both go fishing. Traditionally, men fish for income and women for family consumption as well as collecting shellfish, but with women working, less are now fishing and older women face restricted fishing time due to increased child-minding.

One woman explained that due to working she went fishing at night as this was her only free time. Those that do fish share the catch with their family.

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<sup>9</sup> See Bolabola (1986) for a discussion of land issues in Fiji.

There is an increasing number fishing as it provides quick cash (Pers. Comm., SAO). Permission from the district chief, and a fishing licence, are in theory required, but despite that no one has renewed their licence. No women have fishing licences.

#### 4.6.2 Income

Fiji deregulated its previously highly regulated labour market in 1991. The average real wage rate has continued to rise in most industries over the 1990s (King and Fallon,1995).

The majority of women in the factory receive F\$1.65 per hour (Emberson-Bain,1994). There is no increase for length of service even though Emberson-Bain claims that the company employment data reveals that about 45 per cent of women employees have a minimum seven years experience with 20 per cent between 16 and 23 years of experience. The wages are higher than in the garment manufacturing industry which pays around F\$0.94 cents an hour for skilled workers (Emberson-Bain and Slatter,1994).

The weekly income is \$70.12 leaving approximately F\$63 after tax (yearly income is around F\$3600, excluding lay-offs but not including overtime). This income compares to an average salary of F\$8055 in 1989 for formal employment where the highest salaries were paid by public companies and statutory bodies who mainly employed men (DWC,1994).

In many families the PAFCO women's wage level is considered insufficient to allow the desired standard of living and is supplemented by selling crops and handicrafts. The Poverty Task Force in 1991 defined the poverty line as F\$58.11 per week for an average family of five (DWC,1994). However, a family of four could survive on a minimum of thirty dollars a week in the village (Pers. Comm., Turaga Ni Koro).

Emberson-Bain (1994a) reports that women receive 12 cents an hour less than the men at PAFCO<sup>10</sup>. The gender-based wage differentials that operate are at odds with the skill components in the women's work (Emberson-Bain,1994a). The women are classed as unskilled workers. Yet Emberson-Bain notes that the management claims women are employed for

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<sup>10</sup>The average salary of females is estimated at about 88 per cent of the male average in Fiji (DWC,1994). The PAFCO women's wage is 93 per cent of that of the men.

conveyor work as they are more skilled than men.

Table 3 contains the data on the sources of income for the households that were interviewed. Incomes ranged from \$30 to \$126 per week. In fourteen of the twenty two households interviewed, women were major contributors to total household income. While womens' earnings are often viewed as supplemental to mens' (see Section 2.8.2), this is not so in these households.

Only two of the women interviewed did not have access to a bank account and most have their wages paid into an account in their own name. There were twelve women with their own accounts while five households had joint accounts.

Women are more likely to be aware of family needs and to give priority to this expenditure (See Section 2.8.2), but are constrained if they have little control over money. One women reported that when asked she supplied her husband with money. In another instance a woman controlled the money as she believed her husband could not be trusted to manage it wisely.

The villagers lack experience at managing money and not all were able to save regularly. The Methodist minister believed people in the village do not plan, especially in terms of food as there is always plenty, and that this same rationale is applied to money.

The Methodist Church has a collection at every service and though it is not compulsory to contribute there are strong social pressures to make a donation. Education and transport costs also account for large proportions of the income. Depending on the class and school level, with primary school being the cheapest, education costs vary approximately F\$300-700 per annum.

The church advocates a "care and share" attitude between husband and wife, though this does not extend to the husband sharing his control of the household and its income. Some men indicated that they wanted to use their wife's income to develop their own business (See Section 4.7.2) and subsequently have their wife stay at home and look after the children.

**Table 3: Households Interviewed: Income**

H/H Name	Employment Status		Market Activities (in village)	Income/Week (nett)	Loan	Sav/ week	Bank Account
	Women	Men					
One	Permanent	Garden/TNK		Perm \$63/TNK \$5	Yes		Separate
Two	Temporary			Temp \$63	No	Yes	In own name
Three	Temporary	Garden/Casual	cassava, dalo and mats	Perm \$63/Mkt \$20	No	\$5	Separate
Four	Permanent	Garden/Casual		Perm \$63	Yes <sup>11</sup>	\$5	Joint
Five	Temporary	Garden		Temp \$63	No		Separate
Six	Permanent	Garden/Casual	grog, vegetables	Perm \$63/Mkt \$25	No		Joint
Seven	Permanent	Garden	dalo in town/grog	Perm \$63/Mkt \$30	Yes		Separate
Eight	Temporary	Garden/Casual	vegetables/baking at factory	Perm \$63/Mkt \$20	No	Yes	Separate
Nine	Permanent	Garden		Perm \$63	Yes		In own name
Ten	Permanent	Garden/Casual	grog	Perm \$63/Mkt unknown	Yes		Separate
Eleven	House	Permanent	grog, beads and vegetables	Unknown <sup>12</sup>	No		Separate
Twelve	House/ Casual	Army		Husband \$50	No		In own name
Thirteen	Temporary	Government		Temp \$63	No	Yes	In own name
Fourteen	Temporary	Army		Perm \$63/Husband \$55	No	Yes	In own name
Fifteen	Temporary	Permanent		Temp \$63/Perm \$63	Yes		Joint
Sixteen	Teacher	Permanent		Teacher Perm \$63	Yes	Yes	In own name
Seventeen	Shop	Garden/Shop/ Casual		Shop \$40	No		Separate
Eighteen	House/ Casual	Garden	vegetables and coconut oil at factory	Mkt \$30	No		No account
Nineteen	House/ Casual	Garden	grog, vegetables	Mkt \$30	No		Joint
Twenty	House/ Casual	Casual/Garden	grog, crochet	Mkt \$30	No		In husband's name
Twenty One	Shop	Garden/Casual		Unknown	No		Joint
Twenty Two	House/ Casual	Fishing/Garden	grog	Fishing \$100	No		In husband's name

Key: Sav = Savings H/H = Household Perm = Permanent Mkt = Market Temp = Temporary TNK = Turaga Ni Koro

<sup>11</sup> The loan is in her husband's name as he is a permanent worker.

<sup>12</sup> Vani did not know how much her husband earned.

### **4.6.3 Education**

Fijian females are more likely to complete primary school than males and comprise 54 per cent of third year secondary school pupils, but only 29 per cent of enrolments at tertiary level (DWC,1994).

However, most of the women interviewed did not favour one sex over the other in terms of who should have access to education. One woman did comment that:

*"at least women could get married and have their husband look after her".*

This clashed with the fact that it is the women who have employment opportunities and both genders generally regarded women as having a better opportunity.

Education is not a requirement to gain a job as a fish cleaner at the factory. They do prefer packer/seamers to have two years secondary education and quality controllers to have at least three years.

Education was regarded as important for getting a job outside the factory. Even though most people did not want their children to work at the factory, it provided a backstop employment opportunity. As boys are less likely to obtain a position in the factory, greater educational attainment was important.

### **4.6.4 Labour**

Women claimed to have control over their own labour within the household, but it was clear this could be overruled by a senior male. Women also have control over their daughters and to a more limited extent over their sons, but when working they relinquish some of this control through spending less time at home.

Some women argued that because they were earning money for the household, their husband should work harder in the field, but it also appeared that women who stayed at home had husbands who worked harder in the garden. One person suggested that:

*"women who worked at the factory could not catch the men if they were sleeping instead of working."*

This implies women have some influence over men's labour.

#### **4.7 Summary**

The increase in the productive role for the formally employed women without a concurrent reduction in their reproductive role has increased their workload significantly. The men have only increased their reproductive role minimally to "help out" the women when it is necessary. In some instances the men appear to have decreased their productive role.

Women have gained greater access to income, but not a coinciding change to a more equal status with the men. With increasing income there appears to have been a general decline in agricultural output from the village gardens.

## Chapter 5. The Effects of Formal Employment for Women

### 5.1.1 Income and Credit Benefits

It was difficult to discover how much people earned before formal employment was available but it is clear their cash requirements were less due to living a more subsistence lifestyle. Moves to a consumer-orientated society has seen an increase in the demand for income with the income from the factory being used to satisfy longer term needs as well as shortfalls in food and daily necessities. This can be seen in the purchase of housing, household amenities and furniture (See Section 5.2).

Savings were considered to be important by all those who were interviewed. Six households in Table 3 (Section 4.6.2) claimed to make savings on a regular weekly basis. This can enable a family to provide better education for their children or help households through difficult agricultural seasons and at times of crisis such as hurricanes.

The villagers still use their traditional form of credit (called *kerekere*) at the village level. However, formal loans were first arranged in 1988 in a special arrangement between Westpac and PAFCO for permanent workers only. Repayments were deducted from wages the maximum loan being restricted to three thousand dollars. According to the Manager of Westpac, Levuka, the loans were used for building houses, house improvements, school fees, furniture, and church and social commitments.

From Table 3 (Section 4.6.2) it can be seen seven households had loans, but only one was in the man's name. Despite this one man commented that he would like to use his wife's loan to start his own fishing business thus freeing his wife to be at home with the children.

The Methodist minister contends that women aspire to an attractive and comfortable house more than the men. One man remarked:

*"women prefer to buy furniture with the money they earned,"*

a view also expressed by the women. The number of new houses and furniture observed in the village indicates that the women do in fact have at least some say in the use of their loans.

There is also a Fiji Development Bank (FDB) branch in Levuka increasing the banking services available. Without PAFCO it is unlikely that two banks could maintain their services.

## 5.2 Housing, Facilities and Education

The LPC also identified improved housing facilities as a positive effect of the women working (Malani,1991). Between 1986 and 1995 there was a forty per cent increase in the number of homes in the village. This growth corresponds with the development of PAFCO.

According to Ward (1994), the average standard of living has increased over the last 20 or 30 years. He states that village houses are now almost always built of sawn timber, roofing iron and concrete blocks, rather than locally gathered materials, and vary in size much more than before.

**Table 4: Household Grouping by Employment: Building Materials**

H/H Type	Concrete Block	Wood	Corrugated Iron	Bure	Total
Woman only worker	21 (76%)	3 (10%)	3 (10%)	1 (4%)	28
Man only worker	5 (72%)	1 (14%)	0	1 (14%)	7
Two or more work outside	13 (93%)	0	1 (7%)	0	14
No one works outside	23 (70%)	4 (12%)	3 (9%)	3 (9%)	33
Total	62 (76%)	8 (10%)	7 (8%)	5 (6%)	82

The majority of rural housing in Fiji consists of corrugated iron (43%) and wood (30%) (Ministry of Fijian Affairs (MFA),1995). In Natokalau 76 per cent of the houses completed are made from concrete blocks (Table 4). This is above the average for rural Fijians (19%), and the average for the Lomaiviti Province (33%) (MFA,1995).

People regarded having a concrete block home as their most important purchase. There were only 5 *bures* in the village with only one owned by a person working outside the village. This family was in the process of building a concrete block house. Though loans are often used by the

working women to finance building, obtaining a loan has become more difficult with the tightening of loan criteria at the bank. Other households claimed their concrete block houses came from an inheritance or employment in Suva.

The LPC contended that another benefit of the women working was an increased number of community development projects, such as water supply projects. These are partially paid for by the women who work at the cannery and are often initiated by them (Malani,1991).

The roads, transport, electricity and communication systems stimulated by PAFCO have benefited the island as a whole, and in turn Natokalau. Of the 1652 villages and settlements in rural Fiji only 238 have access to electricity from the Fiji Electricity Authority (MFA,1995), whereas in Natokalau 68 per cent of households have access to electricity. In 7 per cent this access comes through another house. In the two groupings where a woman only, and two or more people, work outside the village there are higher rates of access (68% and 79% respectively) than the households where no one works outside (52%). Clearly, regular income is needed to meet electricity bills.

Many houses with electricity have radio cassette players and refrigerators. Gas cookers were common to all households regardless of electricity. All homes visited also had some form of furniture ranging from simple chairs and tables to more elaborate armchairs, beds and couches.

**Table 5: Household Grouping by Employment: Access to Electricity, Internal Water and Telephone**

H/H Type	Electricity	Borrowed Electricity	No Electricity	Internal Water	Telephone
Woman only worker	19 (68%)	2 (7%)	7 (25%)	1	1
Man only worker	3 (43%)	0	4 (57%)	2	0
Two or more work outside	11 (79%)	0	3 (21%)	2	2
No one works outside	17 (52%)	4 (12%)	12 (36%)	6	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>50 (61%)</b>	<b>6 (7%)</b>	<b>26 (32%)</b>	<b>11 (13%)</b>	<b>4 (5%)</b>

There are four telephones in the village giving one telephone to every 101 people. This compares to the ratio of one telephone per 181 people for all of rural Fiji (MFA,1995).

Only 13 per cent of houses have an internal water supply with more than 50 per cent of these in the 'no employment' category. A steady income is not required to meet payments for use as in electricity and once the system is in place the maintenance required is minimal.

The number of schools and the hospital are also affected by the factory which has provided a focus for economic and structural growth on the island. The hospital in the town provides access to free health care though prescriptions must be paid for. Birth control is available through hospital based family planning clinics.

Clearly, a regular income helps to meet health costs, though it was observed that there was a lack of basic medical supplies such as sticking plasters and mild analgesics. Many children with infected wounds were observed.

The improved access to education resulting from the extra income was also mentioned by many of the interviewed women. This was also identified by the LPC who claimed there were more children being educated up to year four and university levels. Parents were very keen for their children to have a good education. However no figures were available to substantiate any increases in the number of children educated in recent years.

Education costs are met by the income from the women's employment. The costs (see Section 4.6.2) include transport as the Methodist schools are in Levuka. Where it is difficult for a family to pay school fees the village may contribute.

As the high school has only recently upgraded to allow students to complete a fifth year, this will eventually influence increases in student numbers at higher levels of education.

### **5.3 Self Esteem, Work Loads, Decision Making, and Social Interchange.**

The Lomaiviti Provincial Council believe increased self esteem is a benefit of women working (Malani,1991). However, only a few women agreed. Also, Wolf (1986) contends that wage employment does not usually bring equal status for women but may bring about a change in

female workers' movements and behaviour. She concludes that these changes have less significance for parity between the sexes than for the degree of patriarchal control over women.

The SAO defined decision-making in the rural household as:

*"In Fiji you wake up in the morning and then you decide what to do and if there is something else to do, then you will not go to the garden".*

Interviewees considered that household decision-making was by husband and wife consensus, and women claimed that their income gave them more bargaining power. In contrast, Fijian culture as well as the Methodist church believe that men should make final decisions.

Certainly it was observed that working women appear to have more influence and are recognized as the income earners in the family.

Companionship was seldom mentioned by the working women as a benefit. Working at the factory, however, enabled meeting people from other villages. The women suggested they had made friends with other workers at the factory with breaks and lunch times allowing discussing their life at work and home.

Examples were found of working women rising earlier than the men in the household in order to prepare the breakfast, make lunches for the children, clean and tidy the house and do the washing. On their return home from work, some women were also expected to make the evening meal and then clear up and do the dishes. There was a large variance between the interviewed households as to the total workload of the women.

Sasabe (1994) asserts in her study that other family members do not realise how strenuous the work on the fish processing line is. The men recognise the workers are tired but still expect the women to perform their reproductive duties on their return home from work.

Malani (1991) found that the working women expressed concern that the long working hours left them with insufficient time for child care, and the early return to work of nursing mothers has also caused concern. In 1981 Fijian mothers breast-fed for an average of 9.9 months (DWC,1994), whereas the women interviewed suggested working women were breast-feeding

for much shorter times. The DWC (1994) report noted that breast feeding leads to significantly better nourishment than bottle-feeding which is occurring for the babies of working women. The Methodist Church is also concerned about children being left in the care of the father, especially the care of young babies.

Malani (1991) reported that many workers said they missed work due to their children being sick and other family problems. The Methodist minister believes that children misbehave more where the women are at work. Some suggested a crèche could be organised at the factory and many people commented on the need for a kindergarten in the village.

In discussing domestic work Sasabe (1994,page 41) concludes:

*"if people choose to get income from industry, then stereotyped role sharing has to be examined".*

According to Malani (1991), the LPC suggested that one of the problems of the women working was that some husbands are being burdened with extra household chores and resent this. Greater involvement was seen as demeaning to men as well as taking up their leisure time.

According to the WIA, problems with traditional roles began when the women started working as the men were unsure what was to be their role and responsibilities. Traditional attitudes and the prestige requirements of Fijian society reinforce the gender specific roles.

Many women, declares Loutfi (1980), who have broken traditional constraints attribute an important part of their courage to supportive fathers and husbands. The WIA observed that the difficulties that occurred in marriages with women working in the factory occurred more often where work started post marriage.. The more supportive men tended to marry women who were already employed. Also, Hale (1987) suggests that while husbands of employed women were described as more willing to help themselves around the home, this was not always translated into any significant contribution to domestic chores.

Children are still raised within traditional gender roles. Girls help their mothers in child care and household tasks, while boys assist their fathers in the garden and house building. However, this is countered by the children observing their parents performing non-traditional roles. This

includes women going to work at the factory and some men helping with reproductive duties.

The increased productive role of women was seen by some as eroding men's self-esteem. As men were culturally responsible for providing for their household, the fact that women were now the major contributors was creating problems, including excessive (*kava*) drinking (grog sessions) and consequently becoming less productive in their agricultural role. In turn this places more responsibility on the women to meet the needs of the household through the use of their income.

The Methodist Minister believed the men had lost some of their status in the village, and used the example of men having to ask for cigarette money from the women. The Minister noted:

*"if a man earns money, he gives some to the woman to spend and she buys what she needs. But now women are earning the money and it is hard for Fijian men to accept,"*

and commented that the man should be in charge. To combat this he encouraged the men to work harder in the gardens to earn cash and regain their respect.

The WIA said there had been increasing domestic violence during her time on the island (1973-1988), though, in contrast, one male health worker interviewed felt that domestic violence in Natokalau had decreased with only about 5 cases last year. However, domestic violence in Fiji in general has a very high public profile and the number of women seeking assistance at the Women's Crisis Centre has increased almost tenfold since its inception in 1984 (DWC,1994), and 43 per cent of the visits were due to domestic violence.

Household discussions are hampered by the decline in contact through women working outside the village, especially at meal times which are traditionally used for family decisions.

No one interviewed suggested that formal employment had affected fertility and planned pregnancies for the working women (which is supported by the information in Section 2.8.4). Malani (1991) found in her survey at PAFCO that seventy per cent of the workers had three or more children though the average number of births for Fijian women was 4.1 in 1986 (DWC,1994). Seventy per cent of the women working at PAFCO did not want more children due mainly to economic reasons and forty per cent had not planned their most recent pregnancy

(Malani,1991). In 1990, just over 20 per cent of Fijian women used contraception (DWC,1994).

For community decision making the hierarchy is important. The ranking is the chief, the elders and then the headman (Turaga Ni Koro). There are three committees in Natokalau; the village committee (community activities), the church committee and the health committee all made up of males except for the health committee which has two women.

Women are able to attend village meetings and to make their points of view known, though none of the women interviewed claimed to do so. It was thought that mainly older women would speak out, and this was the case in many Fijian villages including those where there are no women earners. When asked who was the most influential woman in the village no one could suggest a specific woman of "power".

Employment does not appear to have helped the women of Natokalau achieve more power within the community. The men are still responsible for making decisions<sup>13</sup> with much of the discussion about issues occurring at grog sessions. If the women do attend a grog session, it was observed that they are seated at the rear of the group and mostly talked amongst themselves.

Economically Fiji is pursuing a more westernised style and this is reflected in changes in education, employment and the social construct of the village. However the Methodist Minister regards the women's rights movement as "Western" and a contradiction of the Fijian way of life.

Sasabe (1994) found in her study of the Taiyo Cannery in the Solomon Islands that the problem of unbalanced meals was not exclusive to working mothers but was a common feature of the community diet. This is similar to the situation in Natokalau and was confirmed by a Health Department Officer.

Fiji has very few adults underweight and in 1981 only four per cent of Fijian children had indications of malnutrition (DWC,1994). However, in 1993, according to the SAO in Levuka, there were 54 cases of malnutrition on the island involving families where women were working at PAFCO, though this decreased to 12 in 1994. Although the factory may not be directly responsible for the poor diet, Sasabe (1994) contends that the social disorder caused by the

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<sup>13</sup>This is challenged by some who argue that women have an indirect voice by influencing their husband's opinions.

cannery work gives impetus to it.

Sasabe asserts that the community in general has an inadequate diet due to a lack of green vegetables and the tendency to use canned foods instead of fresh produce. This, she says, is reflected in the whole community and not just in the families of working women.

Apart from fish there is little protein in their diet (Pers. Comm., Health Worker). The decline in eating fish coincides with the increase in women being employed, as traditionally they were responsible for fishing for family consumption. Women who presently remain in the village during the day are usually responsible for child care and consequently do not have the opportunity to fish, though the increase in family income does allow the purchase of tinned fish (which has a lower nutritional value).

There are differences in the family menus of employed and non-employed women. Instead of cooking traditional root vegetables over an open fire, working women opt for fast food alternatives such as noodles. This concurs with the literature as discussed in Section 2.8.3. The former WIA for the island contended, unfortunately, that women in the villages believe that food bought in the store is more nutritious than the fresh vegetables from their gardens.

According to a Health Department official in Levuka, the factory has affected women's health, especially their knees due to standing and being overweight. Other health problems identified by the women in a Health Department Survey (August 1995) included varicose veins, rashes, headaches from the heat, repetitive strain injuries, stress and boredom. These problems conform with other studies conducted in factories in developing countries (See Chant and McIlwaine, 1995). According to the Health Worker, women in Levuka have bad diets and anaemia is on the rise in working women. This is especially so for nursing mothers and heavy *grog* drinkers. However anaemia is a relatively common problem in Fiji with around 39 per cent of the population suffering from it in 1991 (DWC, 1994).

Increased kava consumption was noted for both men and women in Natokalau. The Fijian woman in Griffen's (1975) interview holds that:

*"women in the home were still the same, accepting their role as mothers only and being passive about most affairs. The only small area of rebellion was the fact that some women*

*drank excessively".*

Susan Parkinson, of the National Food and Nutrition Committee, said

*"Kava use has contributed to a general decline in public health in Fiji through a drop in the production and consumption of traditional root crops. There is a link because people have not got the energy and don't eat properly." (quoted in Parker 1994,page 17).*

Because it is lucrative farmers often plant *yaqona* instead of food crops.

Increases in *kava* consumption by the villagers is also due to the elders of the community urging the men to drink *kava* instead of alcohol. This was due to the men reportedly becoming violent and spending household money on expensive alcohol. *Kava* can be drunk more cheaply as it is grown in the village and purportedly makes the men "quieter" rather than "excitable and violent". It is also encouraged by the elders as it is a traditional Fijian drink.

Those advocating that men should grow more *kava* to increase their productive role are also promoting the social problems arising from excessive consumption of *kava*. Parker (1994) states that the Methodist Church in Fiji believes excessive *kava* drinking is one of the biggest problems facing family life.

*"It separates the wife and children from the husband and wastes a lot of time and of course money," (Reverend Isireli Caucau, general secretary of the Methodist Church quoted in Parker,1994,page 17).*

Parker contends that the men's long *grog* sessions also place more of the burden of work on women, particularly in the villages. Parker (1994) claims that the men just lie around in the villages and get up late. This scene was observed in households in Natokalau.

#### **5.4 Income Dependency are Loans**

The increase in income has led to rising dependency on the money provided by the working women. Methods of remuneration such as payment in kind appear to be declining as the village economy adapts to the increase in the use of money. Any change in the situation of the factory

and the employment opportunities it provides would create damaging effects on the economies and welfare of villages on the island.

The domination of concrete block houses in the village caused some villagers to comment that the men were losing the skills and knowledge needed to make the traditional *bure* because they only rarely used them. Now, households more often paid a carpenter to construct the concrete block houses.

Some men are moving towards fishing as a source of quick cash (See Section 4.6.1). But as noted earlier, the fishing activities of women have also declined and this has led, ironically, to buying tinned fish.

The men with working wives are no longer required to ensure their work in the garden provides an income and enough food to meet the needs of the household. The household relies on the regular income of the working women. While those employed at the factory denied any rumours of privatisation of the government-owned factory, this is the economic direction the government is following as noted by King and Fallon (1995). Any rationalisation may see staff levels reduced in such a labour intensive company. This would have far-reaching effects on the rapidly changing village economy.

Loans were identified as both a benefit and a disadvantage from the women working at the factory and this mixed outcome concurs with Mayoux (1995). The Westpac bank no longer provides the special arrangement they had with PAFCO and those wishing to make a loan must fulfill the same criteria as the rest of the public. There are still women trying to pay off these loans. The Manager of the bank believes that 95 per cent of the women at PAFCO would not be able to meet the loan criteria.

The access to income is also influenced by the loans. One women employee described that after all her tax, loan deductions and transport costs she had \$13 to bring home. From this she also had to make donations to the church and the village.

According to the Westpac Manager very few of the women manage to save any money. Of the five women who managed to save only one had a joint account. Her husband also had a loan but they have a double income.

The employment of the women has created a larger market both within the villages and on the island as a whole. The growth in the number of shops indicates an increase in demand for goods and the increased use of money. Access to credit at shops and banks has generally increased due to permanent incomes but there are signs that some have overcommitted themselves. (e.g. a notice in the window of a Levuka hardware shop listing bad debtors and how much they owed).

### **5.5 Increasing Population and Environmental Degradation**

Though it is argued that women who are employed have less children (Buvinic, 1989), the population of Natokalau is still growing (see Section 4.1), possibly due to the migratory effect of people looking for work.

Men are marrying women from Ovalau and moving to the villages on the island instead of taking the women to their village due to increased employment opportunities (Pers. Comm., WIA Ovalau 1973-1988). The WIA also suggested that women from other islands are marrying men from Ovalau and bringing other female family members to marry men in the villages. Tradition has again been overturned due to the lure and necessity of employment and income needs. Those men who move to Ovalau are encouraging changes in traditional gender roles because they are prepared to accept the changes in order to secure an income.

More people who earlier left the village to seek employment are returning due to the increased employment opportunities at PAFCO. Older people are also returning to retire in the village after living in Suva. One person commented that:

*"Before the factory increased its number of employees it was necessary to leave the village to get employment. Now it is possible to stay."*

The issue of environmental degradation was raised in particular by people who had been away from the village for a number of years. This included people returning from Suva and the former WIA on the island. They described Natokalau as originally being one of the cleanest and tidiest villages on the island, but they all felt that the environmental standard of the village had decreased significantly. The decline was attributed to the women being at work as well as the rising population.

## **5.6 Factors Influencing Gender Roles**

### **5.6.1 Economic and Wage Rates**

Inflation in Fiji has fallen from a high of 12 per cent in 1988 to 5.6 per cent in 1993 (King and Fallon,1995). During this period the major expansion at PAFCO took place, providing many women with a chance to increase household income. Both the literature and the women interviewed contend that the rising cost of living was the major factor in women going to work despite the recognised social problems associated with the women working.

(See discussion in Section 2.7.1).

The move to a more market economy has emphasized the need to earn an income. The increase in the village shops to five indicates that more people are using their income to purchase food and everyday living items. This is affecting the traditional gender roles as gardening, the main source of income for men, is not able to meet the income demands of the household.

The SAO contends that young men see formal employment as a better option than staying home and working in the garden. Currently they see their fathers having less control over income, and having to undertake "women's work", lowering their self-esteem and traditional status.

Since 1991 Fiji has had a deregulated labour market. Real wage rates are less than their 1980 levels (King and Fallon,1995). Labour market reforms have been designed to encourage arrangements linking pay to performance. This was attempted at PAFCO but did not continue due to measurement of performance difficulties.

As gender wage differentials are in force at PAFCO, this must be acknowledged as a reason why more women than men are employed. Section 2.1 contains a discussion of why poverty forces women to accept the low wages in factory employment in developing countries. The "natural" skill factor of the women in working on the production line is not acknowledged in monetary terms but only as an excuse to justify employing women by PAFCO management (Emberson-Bain,1994).

Fiji is facing increasing government debt. This, coupled with plans for privatisation of the state sector indicates that there may be changes in ownership of PAFCO in the future. The 98 per cent

government-owned PAFCO faces increasing international competition. There has been a significant appreciation of the real exchange rate since 1990, which has offset by about a third the improvement in competitiveness of the 1987-88 period (King and Fallon, 1995). Unless the government acts to regain some of the lost exchange rate competitiveness, PAFCO will require greater levels of economic efficiency to remain profitable.

Because there are few alternative opportunities for employment on the island for either women or men, there is a well-educated captive labour supply. Respondents noted other employment would be preferable to PAFCO. Women would also prefer their husbands to be employed but men would mean higher wages for the processing company.

### **5.3.3 Culture, Religion, Education, and Household Structure.**

Wolf (1986) suggests that in spite of new economic roles for rural women in Indonesia, traditional values remain largely intact. Although employed women dressed and behaved differently she found that when women stopped work for some reason they reverted back to traditional clothing and behaviour. She concludes that any changes due to employment were superficial.

Both politically and culturally there is a strong reluctance to change gender roles. Community attitudes to the role of women are still strongly held in terms of the "natural" role of women as seen by Fijian culture. Many of the employed women who were interviewed wanted to return to their culturally defined role looking after their household and children. At weekends and during lay-offs at the factory women were observed returning to their traditional gender roles. The move to a more productive role was seen as a temporary change necessitated by the rising cost of living. It was anticipated that the situation would change back in the future.

Changes in culture were observed. Being able to display signs of increased income is becoming more prestigious. This can affect gender roles as noted in Section 2.7.2. The ability to purchase products is an indication of wealth and a chance to advance one's status as it is in many developed countries. This can be seen in the example of kava. One person stated that:

*"it is considered more worthy to purchase kava than to grind your own when coming to a grog session. Your contribution should be from a bag purchased earlier."*

Cultural prestige requirements prevent men from undertaking a share in the reproductive duties. As identified in the literature, women's traditional tasks are often seen as demeaning to men. Some men ask women to do menial tasks as they believe them to be "women's work" and beneath them. It is accepted behaviour and difficult to change.

The Church firmly advocates returning to the traditional gender roles of rural Fiji. However, the circumstances prevailing in Natokalau are tolerated as the Church acknowledges the importance of the income the women provide for the household. Reverend Baseisei has called upon the women:

*"to review their calling as mothers, because women are supposed to be in charge of children's upbringing."*

Both Methodist ministers interviewed described how the women going to work affected the traditional Fijian way of living, and created problems for the family. They believed people were beginning to worry about money and themselves first in preference to their families.

According to the Church the men should plant more cash crops. By earning more income, they would have more control in the household, regain lost status and return to more traditional gender roles. This would not, however, alleviate the workload distribution problem as men would have less time to help with household and childcare duties.

As the Fijian economy changes, Natokalau faces a more "westernised" lifestyle and is becoming more consumer orientated. The changes in the village are accelerated by the western style education system used in Fiji.

All the children attend school with education for both boys and girls being regarded as important. Children are aware that it is the women who will most likely get jobs at PAFCO. As education is not a major requirement for employment at the factory, more emphasis may be placed on education for boys to enable them to seek employment opportunities outside the factory. This would enable men to regain the productive role in the household and return the women's productive role to a more supplementary one, but clearly lower education levels will disadvantage women.

Women in extended families who work may find their workload less demanding due to other women in the household undertaking their reproductive duties (Wolf,1986). She contends that young households, with new families, are more likely to feel the strain of a working woman.

The nuclear household is both an advantage and a constraint for formal employment for women in Natokalau. In a nuclear household women may have more say, but with less people to share the reproductive duties, husbands are required to ease the workload of employed women. However, female relatives are often called upon to help.

In the extended household other women help so there may be no real change in role for the men. Thus the extended household is seen as advantageous by some working women.

### **5.7 Summary**

The effects of employment for women appear to have changed the traditional way of village life significantly. The problems which have arisen need to be addressed to ensure a net positive contribution from the benefits that have accrued.

The major factors influencing the gender roles have been presented. Each one needs considering and the villagers will need to adapt to those which are beyond their influence, and modify those they can control.

In the next chapter it is concluded a participatory approach to identifying and solving the problems, and promoting an equal distribution of benefits, is required.

## **Chapter 6. Summary and Recommendations**

### **6.1 Summary**

Formal employment for women places considerable social pressure on the household, with women, men and children affected by changes in traditional roles. Both positive and negative outcomes have resulted from the women of Natokalau village being formally employed at the fish canning factory outside the village.

Cultural and religious obligations which emphasize the reproductive role of women were insufficient to prevent them seeking formal employment. This has enabled women to gain a recognised and productive role within their household, particularly where the men have little or no income earning capacity. The "economic invisibility" of women's contribution is not totally removed, but it is certainly less prominent. Employed women claim to have increased their self-esteem due to the formal recognition of their income contribution.

The working women maintained they have more influence in household decision-making, and particularly in financial decisions. Control over their own income is improved by the wages being paid into their own account. Increases in the purchase of furniture, an improved standard of housing in the village, and claims of more education for the children indicate that women have increased their control. Increased access to credit resulting from a regular income has also helped households achieve a better standard of housing.

Children can be educated to higher levels with increased incomes. Parents are planning more education of their children particularly as many wish their children to have more than factory job opportunities. Education is the main option for children to increase their skills.

The workload for employed women has increased, with many having to undertake a 42.5 hour working week as well as completing traditional household duties. Women are still regarded as responsible for the reproductive duties of the household even though some men "help out".

Dietary and health problems appear to have occurred for employed women and their families. A lack of time has caused an increased use of easily prepared but less nutritious food items.

Employed women are also reported to be facing health problems due to the working environment and conditions at PAFCO.

Child care has proved to be a problem for many households, with women returning to work soon after having a baby so young children are left with little supervision. Men are unwilling to help, and are generally regarded as being less competent

Some have argued that men have lost self respect and increased kava consumption has resulted. Formerly, men were mainly responsible for the agricultural productive role, but with women receiving income, growing food is economically less visible and thus receives less recognition. This mirrors the position women face with regard to household and child care duties.

There is no indication, however, that the status of women has changed significantly at both the household or village level. Men are still regarded as the head of the household both in Fijian culture and by the Methodist Church. Many people believe women now have more influence over household decisions though it does appear that men are still making the final decision.

With the increasing impact of the market economy and the western-style education system, the village people are concerned about losing their traditional culture. There is also a growing dependence on cash income with barter and social obligations appearing to be declining in importance. Food and everyday living items are coming from the shops, thus diminishing their ability to grow almost entirely their own food supply.

It appears the employment of women has enabled the Practical Gender Needs of the women to be met. They have been able to provide food, shelter, education and health care for their families. However, their Strategic Gender Needs have not been satisfied. While progress has been made, women's influence in decision-making both within the household and the community does not appear to have reached a level equal to that of the men. Their economic contribution to the household is often more than that of the men, yet the men still retain almost exclusive power in the village.

Cultural and religious barriers appear as the main obstacles faced by the women in achieving their Strategic Gender Needs. These same barriers discourage men from changing their gender roles to take on the more reproductive role required in their changing households and

community. By adapting the cultural and religious obligations of the women the village has accepted changes in the gender roles of women. Adaptations need to be applied to the role of men.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

The recommendations address the gender problems identified in Section 4.7. While they relate to the case study, they may be adapted to suit other rural areas which face similar gender problems due to increased formal employment for women.

The way in which people identify their needs is culturally specific, historically contingent and subject to symbolic processes of identification (Wieringa, 1994). Though these recommendations were formulated from a Western viewpoint, a concerted effort was made to include the Fijian culture. The more Western approach does reflect the growing influence of the developed countries on Fiji and its economy.

Recommendations are made at three different levels: national, village and household.<sup>14</sup> The focus of the recommendations are to encourage the participation of women, men and children in a process of decision-making which will promote development. By integrating everyone into the process of change, it is hoped that problems can be identified and solved resulting in an equitable distribution of benefits throughout the community.

### **6.2.1 National Level**

*Formulate employment policies and laws which prevent discrimination at all levels (but particularly on the basis of gender) and promote sharing of the reproductive role.*

Loutfi (1980) alleges that while meeting basic needs, reducing poverty and providing employment are obviously urgent objectives in low-income countries and that measures to allow a greater sharing of all responsibilities can be incorporated in any strategy so that socioeconomic change is made increasingly equitable.

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<sup>14</sup> The recommendations are not related specifically to the employment situation at PAFCO as the focus of the study was the impact on the women and their households in the village. Nevertheless PAFCO should ensure that the problems faced in the village are being addressed in order to guarantee that their staff can perform efficiently.

Governments can make laws and policies which are more conducive to sharing the responsibility of domestic duties by eliminating discrimination against workers with family responsibilities. Men's roles as fathers tend to be unspecified and unsupported by policies and programmes, though their commitment to their children is integral to the quality of family life, and to the prospects for the next generation (UNPF,1995). Loutfi (1980) advances the idea of supporting men, as well as women, undertaking domestic work by allowing more flexibility in working schedules.

Emberson-Bain and Slatter (1995) have assessed the employment laws in Fiji in terms of gender discrimination for the Fiji Women's Rights Movement. Their proposals (pages 32-39) deserve further consideration by the government. They address specific acts such as the Employment, Wages Council and Fiji National Training Acts and the Fiji National Provident Fund. General recommendations include the ratification of international conventions that affect women workers, enactment of anti-discrimination and equal pay laws, removal of sexist terminology from Fiji legislation, introduction of a labour code, educating women workers in their rights, adequate representation of women on all decision-making bodies, and finally, supplementing employment research.

The modifications to Fiji employment laws would force changes to the working environment at PAFCO. This would help to alleviate the working women's health problems and promote income parity with male workers.

### **6.2.2 Village Level**

The recommendations suggested at this level could be initiated by the village, government agencies or non-government agencies (NGO). It is hoped that this study will highlight the need to address the issues raised concerning the situation in Natokalau. The village has already recognised that there are problems to address. Any changes at a village level would be likely to stimulate similar changes at a household level.

*(a) Adopt a more participatory approach to identifying and solving village problems.*

There should be further discussion amongst the community to identify problems and discuss solutions for them. Using a participatory approach would ensure that all community members

have a chance to speak and be heard. An approach which could be used is the Community Search Conference and Participatory Design Workshop developed by Emery (1996). She claims to have used this method successfully with the indigenous people on the Torres Strait islands.

A community search conference is a carefully planned and designed event in which a community plans its own future and takes responsibility for making it happen (Emery, 1996). Emery states that the basic concept is simple as the responsibility is located with the people who have to live with the consequences of their actions and the plan. According to Emery, community searches usually follow the simple classical design of exploring the external social environment, the system which is the village issue, and then integrating these into a set of strategies and detailed action plans to achieve their most desirable future.

An approach such as this could be introduced using workshops facilitated by the Government through the Department of Women and Culture to guarantee the inclusion of women. Another option is the provision of facilitators by an NGO or aid agency from outside the Fiji government.

*(b) Form Women's Groups.*

Time and tradition are major constraints for women participating in village discussions and meetings. The formation of a women's group or committee which identifies the particular concerns of women in the village could be used to represent the women in village meetings. This would give them a voice which is at present does not formally occur. The committee could meet at a time which is convenient to the women and particularly the working women.

The need for a women's committee/group would be identified through the participatory approach identified in Section 6.2.2(a).

*(c) Identify Cultural Ideals to Protect.*

The people of Natokalau, in conjunction with church leaders, need to identify what is important in their culture and find ways to preserve this. Culture and traditions are always changing and it will not be possible to retain them completely. Nevertheless, those traditions the community deems important can be retained or adapted in an equitable fashion to meet the demands of the changing society and economy.

Some of the village elders have been overseas and experienced life in countries like New Zealand and this can help the village reach a compromise of Fijian and Western cultures.

*(d) Identify Business Opportunities for the Village.*

The village is rapidly expanding in both size and population. The change to a monetary economy within the village could be better achieved with advice on how this operates and how the village will be affected by the proposed changes in the Fijian national economy. Traditional practices of community management need to incorporate the economic strategies being adopted by the Fijian government. Privatisation of the factory may mean less jobs for PAFCO workers. The impact of this needs to be explored along with how privatisation could be used to the advantage of Natokalau. Already the impact of these economic policies on the village has been significant due to increased formal employment opportunities for women and the promotion of the market economy.

The selling of vegetables, kava and handicrafts, and commercial activities such as shops, are all business opportunities which are being exploited at present. Further activities need to be identified, ensuring that both women and men have access to them. Initiation for this recommendation would come from the village committee.

*(e) Promote Physical and Fiscal Planning for Community Development*

The village needs to adopt a planning strategy in terms of their physical and financial resources and how best to make use of them before they diminish or become depleted. A combination of traditional Fijian practices and a more Western approach will be needed to combat new problems arising from population growth and the redistribution of labour resources due to women being formally employed.

The village should consider forming and refining plans for the future including areas such as:

- (i) housing,
- (ii) waste management,

- (iii) the management of community work and,
- (iv) the management of community finances.

The amount of land available for growing crops on Ovalau is limited by the rocky nature of the island. The increasing population means that the land available to each family is decreasing.

Housing and waste management plans help protect the environment and make the best use of resources. With more permanent housing there is less chance of moving houses which are in inconvenient sites. Whilst waste management is still under control, Natokalau needs to ensure that it does not become a major problem.

How community work is to be allocated in the future needs to be decided by the villagers. It does not appear to be an equitable system operating at present. The perceived decline in the village appearance needs to be rectified and the unavailability of women needs to be taken into account in any plans.

With a rising population and the growing dependency on cash income a formal system of management of community funds may need to be adopted. Traditional means of community aid such as food and gifts are being replaced by the need to have access to money.

*(f) Increased Liaison with Government Departments and Non-Governmental Organisations*

MAFF, the Department for Women and Culture, and the Provincial Office can all provide useful information and advice. The departments may be able to help find solutions to the current problems.

For example, Malani (1991) suggests that PAFCO hire a social worker to assist in solving the social problems. However, the WIA from the Department of Women and Culture who may be able to address these problems.

*(g) Redefine Gender Roles.*

The working women in Natokalau have an increased productive role. In order for women to cope with their new role, the role of men must change. Men should reduce the reproductive burden of the women. This is occurring in some cases, but not to the extent that men are assuming the full responsibility for parts of the reproductive role.

The village elders play a strong role in determining activities in the village. The island and village chiefs, and the elders of the village need to be made more aware of the need to relieve the pressure on the working women and their families. The former WIA on the island suggested:

*"in order to help men change their roles, the factory and their builders should have spoken to the provincial office and the village committees and then to the men themselves in order to help the men identify their new roles and help them change."*

The influence of the village elders can be seen in this example. Three years ago the men were drinking large amounts of alcohol. This was causing violence and money problems. The elders proposed shifting from alcohol to drinking kava (their traditional drink). This has occurred and the violence has decreased.

There is still a social stigma attached to the thought of men completing women's traditional roles. The slow change in the village could be accelerated with the village elders' positive backing of changes in gender roles. While this will in many cases upset tradition, changes have already occurred with the women going to work.

The "care and share" attitude the villagers referred to when speaking about their way of life should help promote the changes needed for the people to adapt to new roles. The people already share their homes and food. By explaining the different roles undertaken by men and women it should be possible to create an atmosphere which is more conducive to sharing gender roles.

Men lack the knowledge to perform some reproductive tasks. Griffen's (1975) interviewee claimed that families in Fiji should bring their children up differently so that both boys and girls are taught to do the household chores and to share them.

Pleck et al (1986) discuss social factors which facilitate men's family involvement. These include:

- (i) motivation (the desire to look after the family),
- (ii) the lack of family skills that many men have,
- (iii) social supports and approval and,
- (iv) reducing institutional barriers (eg work, child rights).

These factors need addressing.

### **6.2.3 Household Level**

The requirements are similar to the village level.

- (a) *Facilitate Gender Role Changes to Create an Even Workload Distribution and Shared Decision-Making.*

The Fijian household is a complex unit of different and multiple social relations. Gender roles need to be identified within the household and then the allocation of responsibilities discussed and distributed evenly. The discussions at a village level about redefining gender roles should promote discussion at a household level.

The men need to be made more aware of the difficulties of being employed and completing reproductive duties so women no longer need to actively ask for assistance.

The men see the women as being more assertive when they are asking for help. By better understanding the burdens the assertiveness may not be necessary. The more men undertaking reproductive tasks the more acceptable will this become in the eyes of their peers.

- (b) *Plan for Child Care.*

As noted in Section 2.8.3 employers rarely organise child care facilities. Responsibilities currently fall on the shoulders of the grandparents or other non-working relatives. If the community were to provide child care facilities this would solve the problem for many families and would allow the current carers to undertake more traditional activities such as fishing and handicrafts, thereby helping to improve the diets and income levels of the households.

The expertise required to operate a childcare facility is already held by a village person.

Discussion with the WIA on the island may also prove useful. Options for financing this facility

need to be explored as many believe it is not affordable though it could be run in conjunction with other nearby villages such as Tokou to spread the financial burden.

*(c) Learn and Employ More Budgeting Skills.*

With the increase in disposable income in the household, those responsible for spending the income need to increase their budgeting skills, though the limited amount of income restricts spending to essentials.

The dependence of many households on loans to enable them to raise finance for their houses has produced severe hardship in some cases. The concept of the loans and their criteria do not appear to have been fully explained or adequately identified when offered to the community. Savings plans would have been more effective in encouraging workers to save for their houses and provide a deposit. This experience would have indicated how much could be saved, and therefore how much they could pay off each week.

All the recommendations suggested here are indications of what may be required by individual households and the community. Ultimately, it is up to the community to decide what is most important. It is hoped that the information contained in this report will prove useful in guiding the community to successfully achieve an equitable and sustainable development process where the benefits derived from the formal employment of women can be enjoyed by the whole community.

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## Appendix

**Table A1: Biographical Details of Women Interviewed in Natokalau**

H/H Name	Age	H/H Emp Status		Last Year of School <sup>15</sup>	Marital Status	Religion	H/H type	No.in H/H	No. Child	Housing Material	Elec/ Water
		Female	Male								
One		Permanent	Garden		Married	Methodist	Nuclear	5	4	C/B	Borr Elec
Two	28	Temporary		Form 4	Single	Methodist	Extended	7	2	C/B	Elec
Three	31	Temporary	Casual	Form 5	Married	Methodist	Nuclear	9	7	C/B	Elec
Four	33	Permanent	Casual	Form 4	Married	Methodist	Nuclear	5	3	C/B	Elec
Five	27	Temporary	Garden	Form 6	Married	Methodist	Nuclear	4	2	C/I	Elec
Six	31	Permanent	Casual	Form 4	Married	Catholic	Nuclear	8	6	C/B	Elec
Seven	36	Permanent	Garden	Form 4	Married	Methodist	Nuclear	6	4	C/B	Elec
Eight	40	Temporary	Casual	Form 3	Married	Methodist	Extended	9	5	C/B	Elec
Nine	51	Permanent	Garden	Class 7	Single	Methodist	Extended	4	2	C/B	Elec
Ten	34	Permanent	Casual	Form 3	Married	Methodist	Extended	5	2	C/B	Elec
Eleven	54	Home	Permanent	Class 4	Married	Methodist	Nuclear	3	1	C/B	Elec
Twelve	26	Casual	Army	Form 4	Married	Methodist	Extended	7	2	C/B	Elec
Thirteen	27	Temporary	Government	Form 4	Single	Methodist	Extended	7	2	C/B	Elec/ Water
Fourteen	26	Temporary	Army	Form 3	Married	Methodist	Nuclear	3	2	C/B	Elec
Fifteen	38	Temporary	Permanent	Form 2	Married	Methodist	Nuclear	6	4	C/B	Elec
Sixteen	26	Teacher	Permanent	Form 7	Single	Methodist	Extended	4		C/B	Elec
Seventeen	22	Shop	Shop Garden	Form 6	Married	Methodist	Nuclear	3	1	C/B	Elec
Eighteen	38	Casual	Garden	Form 2	Married	Methodist	Nuclear	2		Bure	
Nineteen	29	Casual	Garden	Form 5	Married	Methodist <sup>16</sup>	Nuclear	5	3	C/B	Elec
Twenty	35	Casual	Casual	Form 6	Married	Methodist	Nuclear	8	6	C/B	
Twenty One	33	Shop	Casual	Form 4	Married	Methodist	Extended	7	4	C/B	Elec
Twenty Two	27	Casual	Fishing	Form 5	Married	Methodist	Nuclear	6	4	Bure	

**Key** Borr Elec = Borrowed Electricity, C/B = Concrete Block, C/I = Corrugated Iron, Elec = Electricity, Emp = Employment, H/H = Household, Wat = Internal Water Supply.

<sup>15</sup> Until 1994 schooling only went up to Form 6 at the local high school.

<sup>16</sup> Husband is Catholic.

## Appendix 2

### A PAFCO Woman's Working Day

A woman employed at PAFCO rises between 4.30 am and 5.00 am. Her husband may still be sleeping. She prepares breakfast and lunches for her family. Cleaning and tidying the house and washing may also be performed before the village carrier leaves for the factory at 6.30 am for the first trip or 7.00 am for the second. There are financial penalties for being late.

Emberson-Bain (1994a, page 13) describes the conditions of work for the women:

*"From 7.30 am to 5 pm each day the women work to maintain Fiji's reputation as a world class producer of canned tuna. Moving on past what is endearingly referred to as the thawing and butchery area and the 400 kilo furnaces that pre-cook vast quantities of defrosted skipjack, albacore, and yellowfin tuna and you will be met by a sea of white uniforms, a frenzy of hand and finger activity, an oppressive blanket of still hot air, enough noise to seriously offend your eardrums, and yes, a pungent smell of cooked fish and sweat. It is here that you will find some 400 to 500 women dividing fish, cutting, cleaning and removing bones, skin and red meat, flaking, canning, weighing, sealing, labelling and packing cans destined for overseas markets like Canada and Britain under a multitude of different brand names."*

The women work 8 hours per day as well as having two fifteen minute breaks and a one hour lunch break for five days a week. They return home by carrier and arrive in the village around 5.30 pm. Showering does not remove the smell of the tuna but does provide relief from the heat.

Then there are further duties to perform. Cooking, cleaning, tidying and seeing to the children are performed. After a meal the dishes are done and then there may be a chance to relax and chat to friends. Many women do not stay up late as the working day is hard enough without being tired.

The work in the factory is divided by gender. Men attend to the unloading, shifting, lifting and general engineering work. The women are confined to the cleaning lines, packing and seaming, quality control and to the office work. The highest position held by a woman in the company is

the Personnel Officer.

Consideration of workplace conditions also appear to be gender-based. In contrast to the freezers where men are subject to a 30-minute maximum period of exposure, there is no monitoring of the heat on the processing line (Emberson-Bain,1994). The overpowering heat, the long hours of continuous standing, and the resulting health problems (especially for pregnant women) need to be examined. According to Emberson-Bain (1994a), the Labour department have never inspected the factory to monitor noise, heat, ventilation levels, overcrowding, sanitation and potentially hazardous machinery with checks confined to boilers, pressure valves and lifting gear due to manpower shortages.

The women endure an unregulated work environment and low wages. Moreover as the only significant source of employment on the island of Ovalau, PAFCO is in a strong bargaining position when it comes to negotiations over these matters. (Emberson-Bain 1994) There are always others willing to work under the conditions offered at PAFCO.

## **Appendix 3**

### **Examples of Stories Related in the Participatory Research**

These stories were related to the researcher by women in the village as examples of the attitude of some of the men in the village. The women were laughing while they told these tales. However they also were annoyed that this is how the men behave. The men's reliance on the women to earn income and assume responsibility for the welfare of the family is in contrast to the traditional household situation.

#### **Story 1**

Semi was sacked from working at the PAFCO. He had taken a small fish into the factory to freeze it. But he tried to walk out with a big fish he had swapped it for while drunk. The guard at the gate asked him for his pass for the fish and Semi said "Just let me and my fish out!" He then sold it to a restaurant in town for \$70 and bought beer. He did not tell his wife what had happened. She only found out when the factory rang for Semi.

#### **Story 2**

Semi and Maraia were living with her sister-in-law in Levuka. Semi was building a bure in the village. For two days he came out to work on the house with Amini. But the two were sleeping the whole day after staying up late in *grog* sessions. Maraia would make lunch for him each day as when she offered to come and cook lunch he quickly said no. When asked the house was coming along he kept telling her that there was "a little bit more to go". But when she came to look, the bure the walls were still missing so the true story of what the men were doing came out!

## Appendix 4

### Definitions of Gender Specific Terminology

***Community Managing Role:*** Activities undertaken primarily by women at the community level, as an extension of their reproductive role, to ensure the provision and maintenance of scarce resources of collective consumption, such as water, health care and education. This is voluntary unpaid work, undertaken in "free" time.

***Community Politics Roles:*** Activities undertaken primarily by men at the community level, organizing at the formal political level, often within the framework of national politics. This is usually paid work, either directly or indirectly, through status or power.

***Formal Employment:*** This is employment in the formal sector. The formal sector refers to the set of activities in private or publicly owned enterprises or in the civil service which conform generally to tax and labour laws and other state regulations (Grown and Sebstad,1989).

***Gender:*** Gender identifies the social relations between men and women. It therefore refers not to men or women but to the relationship between them, and the way this is socially constructed. Gender relations are contextually specific and often change in response to altering economic circumstances. Gender differs from sex in that sex identifies the biological difference between men and women.

***Gender Planning:*** A planning approach that recognizes that because women and men play different roles in society they often have different needs.

***Gender Roles:*** Gender planning recognizes that in most societies low-income women have a triple role: women undertake reproductive, productive and community managing activities, while men undertake productive and community politics activities.

***Informal Employment:*** This is employment in the informal sector. The informal sector is defined as the set of economic activities characterized by relative ease of entry, reliance on indigenous resources, family ownership, small scale of operations, labour intensity, reliance on skills acquired outside the formal education system, and unregulated and competitive markets

(International Labour Organisation(ILO) cited in Grown and Sebstad,1989).

***Practical Gender Needs (PGN)***: Needs women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. PGNs do not challenge, although they arise out of, gender divisions of labour and women's subordinate position in society. PGNs are a response to immediate perceived necessity, identified within a specific context. They are practical in nature and often concern inadequacies in living conditions such as water provision, health care and employment.

***Productive Role***: Work done by both women and men for pay in cash or kind. It includes both market production with an exchange-value, and subsistence/home production with actual use-value, and also potential exchange-value. For women in agricultural production this includes work as independent farmers, peasant wives and wage workers.

***Reproductive Role***: Child-bearing/rearing responsibilities, and domestic tasks done by women, required to guarantee the maintenance and reproduction of the labour force. It includes not only biological reproduction but also the care and maintenance of the workforce (male partner and working children) and the future workforce (infants and school-going children).

***Strategic Gender Needs (SGN)***: Needs women identify because of their subordinate position in society. They vary according to particular contexts, related to gender divisions of labour, power and control, and may include such issues as legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages, and women's control over their own bodies. Meeting SGNs assist women to achieve greater equality and change existing roles, thereby challenging women's subordinate position.