

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK
Danida

GENDER EQUALITY IN AGRICULTURE







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This booklet discusses opportunities and challenges for gender equality in agriculture. Case stories from India, Nepal and Uganda illustrate some of the lessons learnt in agricultural interventions. Sector reforms and improved access to means of production are presented as windows of opportunities to improve the situation of women farmers. On the last pages of the booklet actions to include gender perspectives in policy development and support to gender equality activities in the agricultural sector are suggested. Booklet 5.4 on the private sector recommends actions of relevance to the agricultural sector as well.

Men and women in food production

Women play a significant role at all the various stages of food production, processing and preparing. Many of the poorest countries have an agriculture-based economy. About three fifth of the world's poor are women, scores of whom depend on agriculture for survival.

Rural women are responsible for 60 to 80 per cent of food production in developing countries, yet female farmers are often underestimated and overlooked in agricultural policies and strategies. Numerous governments still deny a woman the right to acquire or dispose of land without her husband's permission. In much of sub-Saharan Africa widows have virtually no land or inheritance rights, and women receive less than 10 per cent of all loans earmarked for small farmers and only one per cent of total agricultural sector credit (UNFPA, State of the World Population, 2005).

The outcome of agricultural production depends on a number of conditions, including soil fertility and water resources. Infrastructure and access to markets are critical to women's ability to turn agricultural production into a source of income. Degradation of agricultural soil



forces women to find alternative areas for food production or new sources of income. This not only exacerbates agricultural land conversion and degradation of land resources, it also adds to the pressure on women farmers, who may face greater risks to their health and physical safety as they venture further and further away from their homes to find productive land to meet their families' needs. It is therefore essential that women take part in decisions on the use of land.

Women's role in agricultural production is essential for the nutritional status of families as well as the generation of a source income. A key role in providing water for households as well as farming adds to this picture of feminisation of agriculture. Consequently, a gender-balanced agricultural growth is critical to successful agricultural programming and, in turn, to reducing poverty and attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

The effect of war and conflict weighs particularly heavily on female farming shoulders. Likewise, men's migrant work places a considerable burden on women's capacity to produce, provide and prepare food. In terms

of preparing the right type of food, awareness of proper nutrition plays a key role. Educating girls, as described in Booklet 5.2, is particularly important in this regard.

Lack of gender disaggregated data means that women's contribution to agriculture in particular is poorly understood in most countries. However, as shown in the boxes of this booklet, if approached systematically and with a long term perspective targeted measures to mainstream gender in programming can be catalytic in bringing about change in agriculture.

Nepal: Ownership key to gender mainstreaming in forestry

In the forestry sector of Nepal, remarkable results in terms of increased visibility of the role of women and a stronger voice for local communities have been achieved through gender mainstreaming. Starting at central Government level in Kathmandu, effects have gradually taken root across the sector.

An estimated 38 per cent of the Nepalese population lives in absolute poverty. The poor often depend directly on natural resources for their livelihood. Women and female children are the main users and collectors of fuel wood, fodder, and forest products, but this source of livelihood is continuously under pressure. However, in recent years, achievements in community forestry involving a higher degree of decentralised responsibility have contributed to an increase in forest land in Nepal.

Creating ownership and awareness through gender expertise

A Natural Resource Management Programme was implemented from 1998 to 2005. Participatory and appreciative approaches were applied in partnership with government. A socio-economic programme adviser with strong gender skills made a difference. The application of these skills increased ownership as well as awareness and capacity in Government with regard to how gender equality can lead to better results. A ministerial Gender Equality Working Group (GEWG) was established with participation of multiple sector partners, including Government departments, major donors, and civil society.



Equality working groups emerging

The Gender Equality Working Group developed into a strong forum to align and mainstream ideas and support gender initiatives. As the process matured, regional Gender Equality Working Groups emerged and it was decided to take the discussions to local groups. The groups were instrumental in initiating sector-wide discussions on gender and social equity strategic issues, and in bringing field realities back to the centre as an input to policy development.

Lessons learnt

Networks of committed individuals can be catalytic in bringing about change. Participatory approaches take time but has produced a high level of commitment and ownership. The programme emphasis on the involvement of women has contributed to giving local communities a stronger voice. The programme has raised awareness of gender equality issues with Government. Capacity to integrate gender concerns has increased and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating progress with gender-sensitive indicators have been put in place. The Gender and Equality Working Group remains active. The capacity of the partners involved to address gender equality has increased. As a result, a Gender and

Equality Strategy for the forestry sector has been prepared and endorsed by the Nepalese Government.

Source: Final Component Completion Report – Central Level Support Component July 1998 to July 2005, His Majesty's Government of Nepal / Danida November 2005

The last to benefit

Women are often the last to benefit from economic growth and development - in some cases women have even been negatively affected. Gender bias and gender blindness persists. Farmers are typically often perceived as 'male' by policy makers, planners and agricultural service deliverers. For this reason, agricultural inputs such as technology, extension, training and services that enhance production capacity often tend to target needs of male farmers. A pioneering example from India of a project trying to address this shortcoming can be found in the box below.

India: Agricultural training to empower female farmers

For more than two decades Danida supported a large-scale pioneering project providing agricultural training courses for women farmers in four states in India. Total support amounts to DKK 279 mill. The main objective was to enhance the performance of farm women from small and

marginal farms in their role as agricultural producers. In order to achieve this, women from small and marginal farms were offered training in a combination of agricultural and marketing skills aiming at food security and income generation. In the process, the training activities served to empower the participating women in their social role.

Female staff in male-dominated environments

All projects aimed at integrating female staff into the Departments of Agriculture (DoA) and mainstreaming gender within the General Extension Systems (GES). One of the greatest achievements has been to create a number of regular posts in the GES for female staff in an environment where 99 pct. of the staff used to be male.

Improving women's economic status

According to an impact study conducted in 2004, between 50 and 75 per cent of participating women reported improvements in their economic status. This is to a large extent attributed to agricultural training, especially in states with limited alternative economic opportunities for poor women.

Lessons learnt

Agricultural training was found to produce an income as well as empower the female beneficiaries of the project. All four projects combined agricultural training and extension with women's empowerment. Two out of three women reported having a greater role in decision making after the training both in farm-related and family matters. The projects have thus brought about some degree of gender transformation at household level.

The approach of the projects gradually evolved from a narrow top-down training and visit system towards a more broad-based, participatory and group-focused approach following the general trend in agricultural extension systems.

*Source: Farm Women in Development: Impact Study of Four Training Projects in India.
Danida Evaluation Series 2004/2*



Sector reform makes way for gender equality

Public-private coordination is vital and sector reforms represent new opportunities in agriculture. Sector reforms aim to carve out the role of central government (such as ministries of agriculture and fisheries) and provide the political and regulatory framework for development and growth leaving the productive activities to private stakeholders. Such reforms provide an excellent opportunity to incorporate gender equality perspectives.

Reforms to improve the agricultural business environment through removal and reduction of barriers to movement of produce and registration of companies represent a window of opportunity for gender equality. Improved access to markets and market facilities improves the productivity and the profitability of family farms; this leads to higher incomes for farmers, both women and men, to sustain their families.

Increased access to means of production for women and men is likely to reduce economic inequalities. Access to and control over agricultural resources such as land, technology and inputs can be enhanced through awareness-raising and improved enforcement of legislation.

Financial services to poor women and men can be improved, and mechanisms for access to micro financing facilities, effective tools include relevant information, extension services and training. Experience from a number of countries indicates that microfinance schemes targeting women in particular show a high rate of repayment and productive use of loans. An example from Uganda of efforts to increase women's access and mainstream gender in an agricultural sector programme is presented in the box below.

Uganda: Mainstreaming gender in an agricultural sector programme

Agriculture is crucial to Uganda's development. A large part of the poorest segments of the population lives in rural areas. Women are more severely affected by poverty than men, partly as a result of discrimination in terms of access to land, credit and extension services.

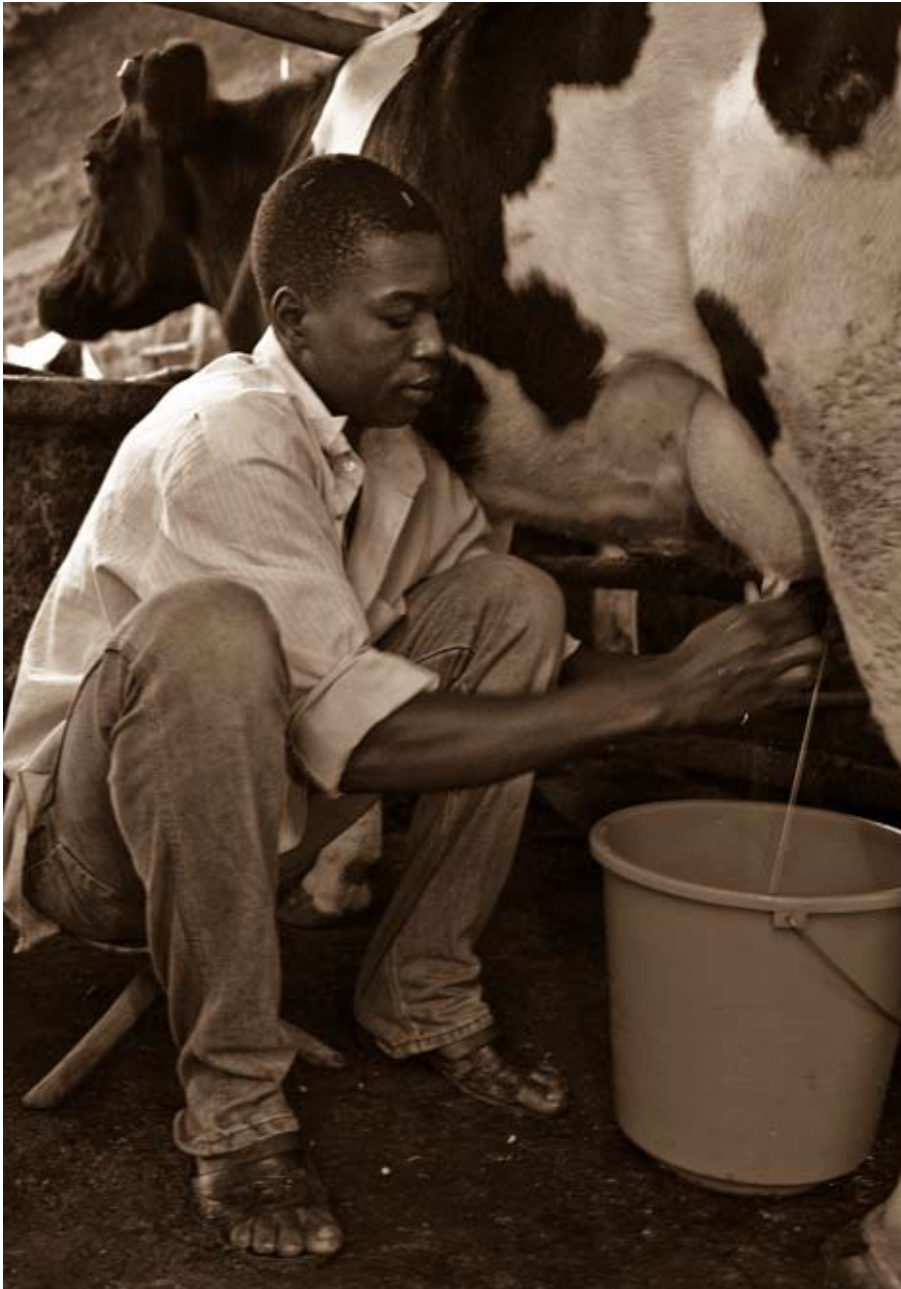
District Agricultural Training and Information Centres

A Gender and Poverty Adviser in charge of screening all national level plans and documents for gender issues has been employed by the agricultural sector programme. The agricultural sector programme supports District training and information centres to offer special training to women, including female school dropouts, and women groups. Female dormitories have been built or improved to encourage women's participation. Transport has been provided to women, to increase their attendance. The curriculum is made non-discriminatory for males and females. Finally, equal participation of women and men is encouraged, and the local community has established youth clubs including the participation of girls. As a result of the efforts, 40 pct. of the young farmers trained at one centre and 40 pct. of youth club members are girls.

Lessons learnt

Correct and adequate information on gender is essential. In the programme components gender sensitivity of plans and activities depends on the quality of information and data generated by the components. The main tasks are to ensure participation and gender responsiveness and that plans are based on realities. In the direct work with farmers, the main activity is to involve both women and men in programme planning through group formation.

*Source: Monitoring Poverty and Gender Equality, Makerere University
& Danish Institute for International Studies, 2003*



SUGGESTED ACTIONS IN AGRICULTURE

A. Examples of gender equality promotion in policy development

- Support overviews of women's rights to land property and inheritance covered in legislation.
- Use information from gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation at national level to inform and lobby for gender focussed strategy and policy processes.
- Emphasize policy measures supporting women's access to land, agricultural inputs and services at affordable prices and up-to-standard quality.
- Obtain the views of women and men and incorporate their views into policies and strategies.
- Support gender analysis studies, preparation and implementation of gender strategies.
- Support planning and implementation of plans to improve national food security.
- Encourage policies to promote financial services to the poor and to women.

B. Examples of gender equality activities in agriculture

- Support women's access financial services for agricultural purposes.
- Improve access to information, extension services and training for poor farming women.
- Support training of female extension workers and include awareness of nutrition in training
- Support adequate storage facilities are accessible to women and men.
- Improve access to market infrastructure for women and men.
- Support judiciary systems to become gender sensitive in handling of land cases and contractual disputes.
- Support information and advocacy campaigns on women's rights to own land.

C. Examples of monitoring and evaluation activities in agriculture

- Promote the development of national monitoring and evaluation systems with gender sensitive indicators.
- Include gender concerns in Terms of Reference for reviews and evaluations
- Support studies on the impact of policies and regulations on women and men

Further reading

- The Gender, Poverty and Social Equity Monitoring Initiative in Natural Resource Management in Nepal. Katrine Danielsen, December 2004.
- Promoting Pro-poor Agriculture. OECD, 2006.
- Farm Women in Development; Impact Study of Four Training Projects in India. Danida Evaluation Series, 2004/2.
- Experiences from Working with Gender in Sector Programme Support. Presentation by Anne Sørensen, Course on Gender Equality in Danish Development Cooperation 30 Jan-17 Feb 2006.
- Incorporation of Nutrition Considerations into Agricultural Research and Programmes. FAO.
- UNDP/GEF: Mother Earth – Women & Sustainable Land Management, UNDP 2007

GLOSSARY OF GENDER TERMS

This section offers a brief glossary of some of the frequently used gender terms in the booklets. Definitions are primarily drawn from the World Health Organisation and the European Commission.

Affirmative action

Measures targeted at a particular group and intended to eliminate and prevent discrimination, or to ameliorate existing disadvantages.

Focal points

Gender focal points are individuals given a particular responsibility for gender equality in an organisation. Given the right circumstances, networks of gender focal points can be a useful method to promote gender equality in a large-scale programme.

Gender

Social (as opposed to biological) differences between women and men. These differences have been acquired; they are changeable over time and have wide variations both within and between cultures.

Gender analysis

The study of differences in conditions, needs, participation rates, access to resources, control of assets, decision-making powers, etc. - between women and men in their assigned gender roles. Booklet 4 gives an introduction to gender analysis at country level, whereas details on gender analysis can be found in Booklet 5 with examples of gender analysis in agriculture, education, health, private sector and good governance initiatives.

Gender audit

The analysis and evaluation of policies, programmes and institutions in terms of how well they apply gender-related criteria.

Gender budgeting

Gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the

budgetary process and restructuring revenues in order to promote gender equality.

Gender equality

Gender equality means that all human beings are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by strict gender roles. Different behaviour, aspirations, and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally.

Gender equity

Gender equity means fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men. It often requires women-specific programmes and policies to end existing inequalities.

Gender mainstreaming

Incorporation of a gender equality perspective in all development policies, strategies, and interventions at all levels and at all stages by the actors normally involved therein. Considering both men's and women's wishes, needs, and experience in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and efforts.

Gender relations

The relationship and power distribution between women and men in a given socio-cultural context.

Masculinity

The quality or condition of being male in a given social context. Some cross-cultural elements, such as aggression, strength, and assertiveness have traditionally been considered male characteristics. However, the socially and historically constructed male characteristics need to be seen in their specific historical, cultural, and social context.

Reproductive rights

Reproductive rights rest on the recognition of the basic right of

all couples and individuals freely and responsibly to decide on the number, spacing, and timing of their children. The right includes the information and means to decide freely and access to the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health.

Sex-disaggregated statistics

The collection and separation of data and statistical information by sex to enable comparative analysis; sometimes referred to as gender-disaggregated statistics.

Special interventions


Special interventions are efforts aimed at creating fundamental structural changes in institutions, policies, legislation, and allocation of resources to promote gender equality between men and women, based on the specific needs in the individual country, policy area or organisation. Special interventions can be stand-alone projects or programmes identified to complement mainstreamed sector programmes in a country programme.

Women's empowerment

The empowerment of women concerns women gaining power and control over their own lives. It constitutes an important part of the efforts to bring about equal opportunities for men and women and involves awareness raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions which reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality.

Women's rights

The rights of women and the girl child are an inalienable, integral, and indivisible part of universal human rights.



GLOSSARY OF GENDER TERMS

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