

Women's Agricultural Activities on Mixed Farms in East Africa

Surveys to find out the agricultural practices and technologies currently being accessed and used by women farmers in Tanzania will help research and extension services more readily to meet the needs of women.

Background

Women may be responsible for more than threequarters of total food production in the smallholder agricultural sector of sub-Saharan Africa. As a consequence of population pressure and male migration, the role of women in both food and cash crop production is becoming more important. Also, customary gender segregation of tasks is breaking down and the number of female-headed households is increasing. The contribution of women is therefore vital to the achievement of improvements in the performance of livestock and crops in semi-arid areas.

Despite the recognised importance of women farmers in Africa, there has been no comprehensive analysis of the impact and applicability of specific agricultural technologies to women. This lack of knowledge restricts the ability of research and extension to meet the needs of women. The project sought to provide this information by looking at the practices/technologies women are currently using in their productive tasks in Tanzania. This led to the development of a gender analysis framework for monitoring changes in gender relations and

looking at the way women and men formulate strategies around specific technologies, and the resources involved, in order to meet their joint and separate interests. The value of the framework depends on agricultural service organisations being willing to differentiate women and men, and to

Contrary to suggestions in the literature, adoption of a dairy enterprise did not necessarily increase the labour burden on women. Women often manage the dairy enterprise, employing itinerant wage labourers to carry out the day-to-day work. In some areas dairy activities were the out-



Women are responsible for 75 per cent of smallholder food production in Africa.

link these differences with the way resources are accessed and 'benefit streams' are controlled.

Research highlights

A gender analysis framework was used by the project to re-examine its understanding of how the dairy programme in Tanzania might contribute to changing the position of women in relation to technology. The gender analysis used at the time suggested that the programme could change gender inequity in access and control over resources by targeting resources directly at women. The new framework encouraged the programme and extension staff to differentiate clients beyond gender, not to see themselves as promoting some ideal type of gender relations nor being directly responsible for any gender changes identified. These were critical first steps in changing the gender strategy and improving the effectiveness of agricultural service delivery.

come of a decision to invest in draught animal power in order to expand crop production. Women's involvement in these households was limited to decisions about milk marketing – not production strategies.

Access to land for fodder production in zero-grazing systems was a significant constraint for women farmers, particularly the poorest. The literature survey showed that access to land resources can be improved through forming a group. However, it was found that women's groups are not necessarily serving the needs of all members and not all members gain equal access to resources.

Uptake

Two projects in Tanzania – the Southern Highlands Dairy Development Project (SHDDP) and the Kagera Livestock Development Project (KALIDEP) – have changed their approach, i.e. improving livestock

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Project completed in 1996



Almost three-quarters of the world's poorest people are women. Women's poverty, in terms of access and control over resources, cannot be addressed solely through targeting of resources at them – their resource position reflects their overall position in relation to others in society. (White paper on International Development, 1997) (Photo: D. Elsworth, International Livestock Research Institute, ILRI)

performance by targeting women, to an approach that involves supporting both women and men in negotiating changes in labour allocations for managing the dairy enterprise, and changes in the way milk output is used. More recently, following Government of Tanzania plans to decentralise decision-making within its agricultural service organisations, these projects have shifted towards local group control over the distribution of improved dairy animals. This has led the projects to be apprehensive about how gender issues will fare in future.

In an initial step at addressing the need to continue active promotion of gender issues at the level of local government, the project trained a number of staff from governmental and non-governmental organisations in gender awareness, gender analysis and associated programme changes. However, it is recognised that a much

greater and co-ordinated effort will be required from donors and governments alike if gender equitable development is to be achieved.

Linkages

The outputs of this project have been used in two other studies. The first, Shinyanga Region Human Development Study, is funded by the World Bank and implemented by the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex. The second study, based in Zimbabwe, aims to develop alternative models/frameworks for gender analysis and gender targeting. A joint Natural Resources Systems Programme (NRSP)-Crop Post-Harvest Protection Programme (CPHP) project, R7039 on analysing changing gender relations for monitoring and evaluation of the renewable natural resources sector, was funded by DFID's NRSP - Socio-Economic Methodologies. Linkages still exist between staff

working on Project R7039 and the project presented here. Research outputs are also being used in World Bank projects in Nepal.

Relevance to sustainable livelihoods

The outputs meet DFID's developmental goals which emphasise specifically that more attention should be given to addressing women's feeling of isolation, disempowerment and lack of say in how their lives are run. Opportunities for communities in semi-arid areas can also be created where urban demand for processed (longer shelf life) dairy products exists.

Selected project publications

- Okali, C. and Mims, J. (1998) Gender and smallholder dairy production in Tanzania. Report submitted to the DFID Livestock Production Programme.
- Locke, C. and Okali, C. (1999) Analysing changing gender relations: Methodological challenges for gender planning. *Development in Practice*, 9 (3): 274–286.
- Okali, C., Locke, C. and Mims, J. (2000) *Guidelines for the Development of Gender-Sensitive Interventions by Agricultural Researchers*. Overseas Development Group, Norwich, UK.

A number of papers related to the project were presented at the workshop *Analysing Changing Gender Relations in Natural Resource Research and Projects*, 4–6 December 1999, Mavingo, Zimbabwe. For further information please contact the Project Leader, Christine Okali.

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