



Rural advisory services and gender

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Sustainable Development Goals, gender and food security



500 million smallholder farmers supply food for over 2 billion people in Africa and Asia

Women represent 43% of total agricultural workforce

It is vital to consider the roles they play that differ to men's in the agricultural value chain

Women in rural areas in low income countries have less access to land, quality seed, fertilisers, pesticides, credit, insurance, education and rural advisory services



Rural advisory services



Gender focused efforts in agricultural information access place much emphasis on short-term solutions

Most efforts tend to overlook transformative and empowerment processes that come from ethnological activities, responsible for long term integrated improvements in gender equal information access

Approaches usually developed to satisfy international or multilateral donors through time delineated projects, rather than participatory ones

The research question

How can gendered interactions at a formal and informal level be investigated to contribute to transformative change on a country's rural advisory network?



Perceptions and change

Aims

- To provide comprehensive picture of public RAS from a gender perspective at the national/local/individual end user level
- To triangulate specific individual perceptions that delineate potential solutions in order to institutionalise gender-responsive activities/policies
- To assess a specific international development initiative on its influences on public RAS activities from a gender perspective

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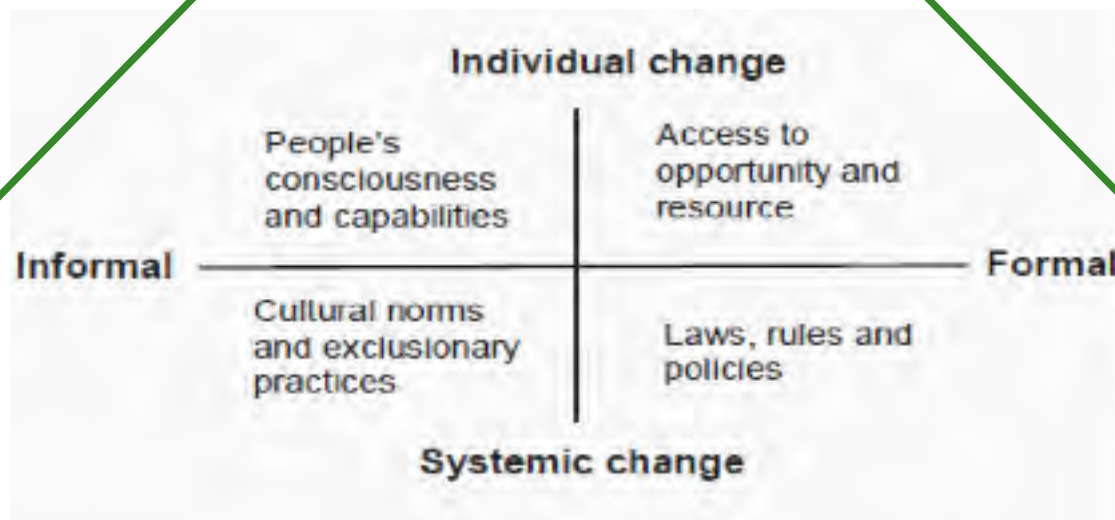
Public
agricultural
system

Public sector
bodies

Public rural
advisory
system

Gender at
work system

Role of
International
Development?



Individual
farmers

Individual
extension workers

The Pakistan case study



Study location

- Jhang and Bahawalpur – 2015/16
- Chosen because of agro-climatic and economic similarities

Study were conducted utilising:

- Focus group discussions
- National and local stakeholder analyses
- Key informant interviews
- Household questionnaires
- Extension worker questionnaires



Findings at the individual level

Women in farm households:

- access information less often and from less sources
- feel more comfortable in spiritual and informal settings

Men in farm households:

- Access information more often than women, but still in relatively small quantities
- Feel at ease in many different environments, but prefer official/administrative locations

*Lamontagne-Godwin et al,
2018 JAEE*



Findings at the individual level

Literacy is important to increase women's access to information, but only part of the solution

- Need to look into where they physically access information and on what topics
- It is not enough to focus only on the source, we must consider the pathway

ICTs have a role to play?

- Radio and mobile phones not mentioned once by female smallholders
- Important to ask ourselves when/where/how women feel they can access ICTs, and on what topics

*Lamontagne-Godwin et al,
2018 JAEE*



An example of institutionalising approaches

Triangulating perceptions between extension workers and farmers of both genders show that lead female farmers could be a very useful tool for women farmers

ICTs still do not feature prominently – shows that whilst we may be focusing on face to face communication, more research needs to be conducted on media technologies

Is the problem broader?

Male extension workers understand male and female farm holders' unequal access to information, but are they actually aware of the problems this unequal access causes?

*Lamontagne-Godwin et al,
2018 in submission*



What does this mean for the SDGs?

Hunger (food security) and gender equality SDGs are linked

Developing systemic gender-responsive processes are harder to achieve but more effective in the long term to achieve gender parity and food security

Understanding individual perceptions are key to developing effective and appropriate systems of knowledge

Monitoring and evaluation of these systems must not be an afterthought – it has to be embedded into the R&D



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References available upon request
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