GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: KEY TO POVERTY REDUCTION, FOOD SECURITY AND SOCIAL WELFARE

Women in Triticum Awards Ceremony
2013 BGRI Technical Workshop
19-22 August, New Delhi, India
Agriculture in Developing Countries

• Agriculture is the pillar of economy for most developing countries in the world.
• It is especially basic for sub-Saharan Africa’s growth and for achieving the MDG of reducing poverty by half by 2015.
• Agriculture employs 65 percent of Africa’s labor force and accounts for 32 percent of gross domestic product.
• Agricultural performance has improved since 2000, but growth is not yet fast enough according to World Bank assessment.
Agriculture in Developing Countries

- Agricultural GDP in SSA accelerated from 2.3 percent per year in the 1980s to 3.8 percent per year from 2000 to 2005. Growth has been based mostly on area expansion.

- UN, WB and others believe problem of poverty and food security can be lessoned if Govs make policy improvements and pay attention to women participation in agricultural development.
Need for structural adjustments by Govs

• Five core areas that need attention:
  • Facilitating agricultural markets and trade;
  • Improving agricultural productivity;
  • Investing in public infrastructure for agricultural growth;
  • Reducing rural vulnerability and insecurity, and
  • Improving agricultural policy and institutions.

• The WB, along with many partners, is helping developing nations to achieve progress through implementation of the above five core areas of public action.
Role of women in agricultural development

• Proportion of women to men is 50% or slightly more country wise or globally.
• Women shoulder heavy responsibility in a family or a community.
  • They are mothers and raise children (a hard work mostly devoted to mothers);
  • Rural women fetch water and firewood from a long distance; they cook and feed the family.
  • They are involved in farm work, marketing for family needs and laundering.
Women in agriculture …

- Women work hard in a family or community but,
  - Until recently women do not own property

- Land belongs to a husband in marriage or in divorce

- Women may inherit land if husbands die

- Recent land reform laws changed these inequalities
Women in agriculture …

- Gender Inequality:
  - Exists at family, community and national levels in majority of developing countries.
  - From childhood to adulthood, females are always at a disadvantage at all levels.
  - They are unequal at home and work places; unequal in power and resources.
  - At home parents are to blame for the inequalities while lack of non-discriminatory policy may be responsible in work places or farmer cooperatives.
Women in agriculture ...

Women & men in training

Woman & resistant variety
Women in agriculture …

• The Derg regime (1974-1991) had a slogan “Development cannot be realized without the participation of women” and established women associations

• Women association of that period did not do much to further women’s aspirations
Women in agriculture …

• The current government (1991- ) prohibited any discrimination or subjugation against women and established, by law, their equal rights with men
  • Awareness created widely
  • Ministry of Women and Child Affairs in place
  • Men became supportive of women, though less on religion and tradition grounds
Women in agriculture - Household on-way to work
Women in agriculture …

• Involvement of women in agricultural development increased

• Role model female farmers and National Award winners surfaced: “Development Patriots”
  • These essentially became millioners in few years time.
  • Currently, these do not exceed 5-10% of total awardees, but big progress compared to previous periods.
  • More encouraged to join the rank.
Women in agriculture …

Women participate in selecting new wheat varieties

Participatory evaluation of early crop in field
Women are a little shy during a field day; a lady performing what once was a man’s role.
Women are good savers & build property; now men and women jointly decide on production, marketing & saving
Efforts to eliminate discrimination and inequality

• *International focus:*
  • The UN has set an agenda (the 8 point MDG) aimed to reduce poverty and promote gender equality globally.
  • This noble agenda encouraged nations, international organizations, NGOs and donors to consolidate their efforts to achieve the MDGs.
  • Proper implementation of the MDGs mostly benefits women and children at family, community and national levels.
Efforts to eliminate discrimination & ….

- **Regional Focus:** On 8 March 2009 the "Africa for Women's Rights" Campaign was launched at the initiative of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), in collaboration with **five** non-governmental regional organizations:
  - 1. The African Center for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS);
  - 2. Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS);
  - 3. Women’s Aid Collective (WACOL);
  - 4. Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF);
- These organizations make up the **Steering Committee** responsible for the coordination of the Campaign.
Efforts to eliminate discrimination & …

• **National focus:** in Ethiopia, among rights entrenched in the constitution, articles very specific to women:
  * Article 34 [1] and 35 [2] explicitly recognize women’s equal marital rights upon and during marriage and upon divorce.
  * Article 34 [4] allows for the enactment of a law recognizing religious and customary marriages, but discrimination against women within such marriage is prohibited.
Efforts to eliminate discrimination and inequality (National focus ..)

• Article 35 [1]: “Women shall, in the enjoyment of rights and protections provided for by this constitution, have equal right with men.”

• Article 35[3] allows for affirmative measures, enabling women to “participate and compete” equally with men in political, economic and social fields,

• Article 35 [4] prohibits laws, customs, practices and stereotyped ideas which oppress women and adversely affect their physical and mental well-being.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exploratory questions</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tr>
<td>- As a researcher and development promoter</td>
<td>- The answers are candid and straightforward by both</td>
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<td>- I meet and talk with small farmers often.</td>
<td>- Malpractices have ceased</td>
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<td>- I always ask, women and men, singly or together</td>
<td>- Development partners rather than master and slave</td>
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<td>- In meetings, training or at f/f/days</td>
<td>- Rights of kids respected and schooling must</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Has discrimination and subjugation ceased? Is right of girl to go to school respected? Are under age marriage still practiced? Any beating by husband? Property ownership?</td>
<td>- Under age marriage highly reduced, some abductions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Beating by husband - almost nil</td>
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<td>- Property - co-owned</td>
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Gender inequality can be reduced by giving equal opportunities

- Individually, as a group, institution or nation, we can contribute towards gender equality by:
  - Offering education to children
  - Promote social integration
  - Increase women employment
  - Involve women in politics and social activities
  - Arrange social protection programs
Gifts from farmers: Traditional healthy food (from women); traditional alcoholic drink (from men)
Gender inequality can be reduced by giving equal opportunities

- Individually, as a group, institution or nation, …
  - Generate awareness among parents
- Provide scholarships to girls and young women to further their education
- Increase public awareness and condemn child abuse and violence
Women farmers learn about many subjects – gender and their rights, nutrition, …. 

Discussion w/ women during field day

Faba bean is good for soil and human health
Women farmers learn about:

Visitors & why they visit their village

Education of their children
Women rights focused organizations

- The Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA) [http://www.etwla.org/about.htm](http://www.etwla.org/about.htm)


- Other national and regional organizations also exist
WIT

- WIT program is accomplishing a great job:
  - Opportunities for educated women in Triticum to advance their knowledge and carrier
  - Awareness creation: for example, EIAR learned a lot from WIT. The gender lady Mrs. Yeshi did not miss any BGRI workshops & she has been serious about women’s right. Her replacement, Dr. Rehima, is in this meeting and I hope she will gain a lot as a new comer
  - EIAR DDG, Dr. Adugna’s presence here will help advance WIT initiative in EIAR and Ethiopia
  - My association with BGRI and WIT has promoted my perception of women, especially of smallholder farmers; encouraged me to promote their awareness.
WIT

• It is DR. Borlaug’s Legacy that created the WIT opportunities. Let His Soul Rest in PEACE.
• I thank Jeanie and Ronnie for their commitment and up-keeping The Legacy.
• We all know that Sarah is instrumental in WIT and we should not forget that EPAC and the Foundation are behind the BGRI and The Borlaug Legacy.
THANK YOU ALL