

PN-AAX-503

Fao

ISBN 50739

Women in Development
Agency for International Development
Room 3040, 22nd State
Washington, D.C. 20523
(202) 635-3042

Date of Acquisition _____

Source _____

WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT AT THE
UN/EAC WORLD CONFERENCE ON AGRARIAN REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Prepared by the:

Office of Women in Development
U.S. Agency for International Development
Dept. of State
Washington, D.C. 20523

June, 1979

The views and interpretations
in this publication are those
of the author and should not
be attributed to the Agency
for International Development.

When you are through with this
document please pass it on to
someone else who will use it or
return it to WID Resource Center,
Room 3040 M. S., Agency for Inter-
national Development, Washington,
D.C. 20523, and we will recirculate it.

June, 1979

WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT AT THE
UN/FAO CONFERENCE ON AGRARIAN REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Women in most developing countries have long played important roles in production, particularly in growing, processing, marketing, and storing food. Women producers need direct access to land and water, agricultural credit, agricultural inputs and extension services if they are to be responsive to the incentives for agricultural growth.

Women in Development is not a separate issue, but is integral to all discussions about agrarian reform and rural development. In early 1979, the Office of Women in Development, U.S. Agency for International Development, commissioned from leading scholars of women in development a number of papers on special topics, including land reform, agricultural inputs, extension, non-agricultural employment, and organizations. A case study, which incorporated all those topics, was also commissioned. The purpose of the papers was to review existing research, identify constraints which women face, and draw policy implications. The papers demonstrate that women are critical to all items on the FAO-Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development.

This packet of materials contains information relevant to the conference, including the draft U.S. Position Paper, "Integration of Women in Development," special briefing papers to assist discussion of resolutions, and summaries of papers prepared for this conference. [The views and interpretations in those summaries are those of the authors, and should not be attributed to the Agency for International Development or to any individual acting in its behalf.]

Office of Women in Development
U.S. Agency for International Development
Dept. of State, Washington, D.C. 20523

TABLE OF CONTENTS
UN/FAO WORLD CONFERENCE ON AGRARIAN REFORM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
PACKET ON WOMEN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

First Section

Draft, U.S. Position Paper, "Integration of Women in Development"

Second Section

Special Briefing Papers:

"Women's Rights to Inherit and Claim Land"

"Women and Security of Land Use Rights"

"Women's Rights to Shares of Agricultural Output"

"Female Headed Households"

Third Section

Paper Abstracts:

1. "Case Study: Department of the East, Upper Volta"
2. "Women's Legal Access to Agrarian Resources"
3. "New Models for Agricultural Research & Extension:
The Need to Integrate Women"
4. "Women's Employment in the Context of Agrarian Reform &
Rural Development"
5. "Women Agricultural Producers: Industrial & Non-Industrial
Societies"

INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

Nature of the Issue

Women in most developing countries have long played important roles in traditional production systems, particularly in growing, processing, marketing and storing food. In the late 1960's, however, it was increasingly observed that women's economic contributions were being undermined by development programs.

Women producers, for example, need access to land and water, agricultural credit, and agricultural inputs and extension services if they are to be responsive to the incentives for agricultural growth. Yet development projects often encourage the transfer of women's jobs to machines and men; and extension programs are based upon the assumption that both information and benefits will flow automatically from husbands to wives. Women and the families which depend on their income have thus been placed in more vulnerable rather than strengthened positions by many development efforts.

The challenge implicit in this issue is for development planners and practitioners to meet the economic needs of women and thus to enhance their opportunities to contribute as full partners in the development process.

U.S. Position

1. The U.S. supports the view expressed in the Programme of Action that "rural development based on growth with equity will require full integration of women, including equal opportunity to develop and employ their skills." The U.S. recognizes that women in developing countries already have skills in agricultural production, processing, and marketing which provide a broad and relevant foundation on which to build.
2. The U.S. reaffirms its established position with regard to assistance for women in developing countries. This position is stated in the "Percy Amendment" to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961:

In recognition of the fact that women in developing countries play a significant role in economic production, family support, and the overall development process, U.S. aid shall be administered so as to give particular attention to those programs, projects, and activities which tend to integrate women into the national economies of developing countries, thus improving their status and assisting in the total development effort.

3. The U.S. will continue to implement the view embodied in the Percy Amendment by continuing and expanding efforts to extend development assistance to poor women:

- . increasing economic capacity through learning and training
- . fostering labor intensive economic activities to provide more income-earning opportunities
- . increasing productivity through the introduction of appropriate technology, credit, and other inputs
- . improving health and nutrition so that people have the energy to work
- . giving people control over their own reproduction
- . preparing people for greater participation in organizations and associations so they can control the resources and decisions affecting their lives.

4. The U.S. recognizes the difficulties inherent in designing and implementing public development efforts to reach specific groups of people effectively. Alternative modes of program and project implementation are being tested, however. While it remains to be seen under what conditions "women-exclusive" projects are more effective than "women-inclusive" approaches, the vigor with which initial efforts using both strategies are being tried in a number of countries ensures that future efforts to reach women in development will have valuable experience to draw upon. The U.S. is prepared to support both additional efforts to target assistance to women as a special group as well as efforts to include women's needs and concerns in broad-based programs for development.

5. The U.S. considers that the informational base being generated around the world speaks persuasively for increased programming attention to the priority areas slated for discussion at the Mid-Decade Conference for Women:

Employment
Education
Health.

Agrarian reform and rural development must be undertaken with women firmly in mind for these priority concerns, especially employment, to be adequately addressed in action.

Discussion

The international community has now widely endorsed the view that successful development depends in large part on enhancing the social and economic roles of women. National-level women's bureaus have been set up in many countries; and the participation of developing country women in international fora focusing on women in development is increasing. At the regional and international levels, collaboration with the U.N. regional bodies aimed at integrating women into development activities is stressed.

The Mid-Decade Conference of the Decade for Women will, as noted above, focus on education, employment, and health. These are important emphases for improving women's human resource potential, not only as a matter of equity, but because their contribution to production must be enhanced. To coordinate efforts worldwide, improvement of rural women's situations in in these three sectors should be a central theme.

Legal rights for women is another key concern, exacerbated now because of new legal systems superimposed on older religious and cultural traditions. While the U.S. may not intervene in this area directly, it is well to be informed of the implications which legal rules and sanctions regarding women's roles and rights hold for the equitable achievement of agrarian reform and rural development objectives. Four briefing papers on agrarian reform issues are attached.

Technical assistance incorporating greater awareness of women's economic needs and potential contributions is also a major concern. This aspect of the issue has important implications for staffing, as more women must be recruited at all levels as field officers, members of design teams, and at international, national, and local management levels of development enterprises.

Drafted by: PPC/PDPR/RD:ESimmons
PPC/WID:KStaudt

CLEARANCE:
PPC/WID:AFraser

5

Special Briefing Paper on Women and Access to Land and Water

WOMEN AND SECURITY OF LAND USE RIGHTS

Problem

Women usually farm land to which they have use, rather than ownership, rights. This places women in a position akin to that of tenants vis a vis the legal owners of the land. Women's land rights are usually insecure.

Insecurity of tenure is particularly problematic in cases where the relationship between a woman cultivator and the land owner is liable to dissolution through death, divorce, or separation and where legal codes do not recognize residual claims.

Talking Points

1. Security of tenure is felt to be important in providing investment incentives for farmers. An insecure tenant will be unwilling to invest in permanent land improvements in order to raise productive capacity if the tenant may be evicted from the land being cultivated at any time. Women farmers as "tenants" rarely have security of tenure either through customary or statutory law.
2. No land reforms to date have made explicit provisions that land may be allocated to women in their own right.
3. Land reforms in many cases have perpetuated conditions of insecure land tenure for women:

In INDIA, the Kerala Law of Land Reforms of 1963 established ceilings on the amount of land held by any one person or family and did not create rights in land for monogamously married women apart from the rights of their husbands. Only polygamous wives were granted ownership rights as individuals.

In COLOMBIA, the Agricultural Land Reform Law of 1961 provided for redistribution of lands to the needy. Needy persons were defined as married males of at least 18 years of age. Total family labor availability, including women's labor, was, however, used to determine the maximum size of farmland allocation.

In KENYA, statutory law governs the procedure of registration and adjudication of reform lands, but customary laws and practices govern disposal and succession. Several cases in the courts have established that women are expected to take possession of land only as trustees or guardians, retaining use rights during their lifetimes or until male children press their inheritance claims.

In TANZANIA, patrilineal land rights were introduced in a settlement scheme even where matrilineal rights were customary.

Special Briefing Paper on Women and Access to
Land and Water

WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO INHERIT AND CLAIM LAND

Problem

Women usually farm land which belongs to husbands or fathers. When death occurs, these women often have no inheritance rights, or have inheritance rights which are significantly less than those of their male relatives. When wives are not entitled to be joint land owners with their husbands, women may lose all rights to land and compensation for investments made into jointly-farmed land.

Both situations reduce women's incentives to become more productive farmers through long term investments and place women's abilities to contribute to household maintenance through increased incomes and increased food supplies derived from farming activities in jeopardy.

Talking Points

1. Legal rulings in many countries have established the principle that women are to be maintained and not to have the responsibility for maintaining others. Widows with children are recognized to be capable of temporarily assuming responsibility for household maintenance, but daughters are not. Several examples of the principle may be cited:

In KENYA, the law has established that widows may claim ownership of deceased spouse's lands and use it during their lifetimes. Daughters may not, however, under customary law, formally inherit land.

In NEPAL, law makers have denied daughters the right to inherit leaseholds granted to deceased fathers although sons may do so.

In INDIA, several land reform laws permit a son to acquire title to holdings beyond the ceiling limit, but do not make a like exception for a daughter. One researcher reports: "Yet social scientists indicated that it was the men who tended to leave the land and left the women to care for themselves."

Under Islamic law, widows with children may inherit land. A daughter may receive only half the amount her brothers receive.

2. These legal traditions thus deprive women who are farm managers or who jointly manage a spouse's or father's land of the right to continue farming upon the death of the male.
3. Land tenure reforms and land tenancy reforms which do not explicitly deal with the legal rights of women will thus have great potential for reducing women's abilities and incentives to farm.

Special Briefing Paper on Women and Access to Land and Water

WOMEN'S RIGHTS TO SHARES OF AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT

Problem

Women work as many or more hours in agricultural work than men in many subsistence oriented societies. Many men farmers, however, are taking increasing responsibility for cash cropping and working at off-farm jobs. Many women farmers have thus taken on men's food production tasks as well as contributing to cash cropping activities. Yet women do not share in the agricultural output in terms commensurate with their inputs.

Women's incentives to farm productively are dampened by insufficient shares in the increased output.

Talking Points

1. Like any farmers, women farmers are motivated to participate in agriculture and to expand productivity by stake, return, and need.

- Where their stake is reduced, women have been noted to be uncooperative in agricultural development endeavors.

In NIGER, women refused to plant fruit trees because the trees and products would belong to their husbands. Women preferred instead to invest in the livestock which they owned rather than in field crop production.

- Where women's returns are not commensurate with their inputs, they may be less willing to invest similar levels of inputs.

In TANZANIA, women pyrethrum growers joined the cooperatives for marketing as individuals rather than as adjuncts to their husbands' memberships. In this way, they felt they could prevent their husbands from claiming any of their personal income.

- Where family consumption needs are pressing, women often devote their incomes to meeting this need. This may endanger future productivity as savings for investment are reduced.

In BOTSWANA, women farm managers spent almost 100% of incomes on household consumption. Male farm managers re-invested up to one-third of income in agricultural production.

2. Technical improvements have taken place in the cash agricultural economies of many countries, while food production technology has remained stagnant. Women farming food crops with few technical inputs and low cash returns for their marketable surpluses can be expected to be less productive than farmers in the cash crop sector. In many countries, male farmers dominate the cash crop sector. Yet it has been noted that the cash crop incomes are subject to substantial fluctuation and have led to greater reliance on women's food crop production activities.

June 5, 1979

Special Briefing Paper on Women and Development

Female Headed Households

A quarter to a third of households are estimated to be headed by women. Growing documentation indicates that female heads have limited access to development programs and operate with labor shortages unmatched by farms with two or more adults. Yet programs are often based on the assumption that households are headed by men, that men make most decisions, and that information and benefits "trickle down" from men to women within households.

TALKING POINTS

1. Women who head households are statistically invisible. Definitions of heads vary from country to country, and change within countries as well.

In INDONESIA, any male in the household is automatically defined as head. Young boys are labeled head in what, de facto, are female headed households.

In KENYA, the number of female heads has declined over the last decade. This decline is largely due to changing definitions of head, which now designate households with absent men as male headed.

2. A tradition of separate male and female income and responsibilities prevails in many African societies. In parts of Asia, women control family financial matters. Nevertheless, development planners and programmers still tend to assume that household income is joint income or allocated by male decisions.

This assumption was applied in an EAST AFRICAN settlement scheme, located in an area where women are the traditional agriculturalists. Rice fields were allocated on a household basis, and garden plots were too small to meet family needs. Despite the predominance of female labor in rice fields, men were encouraged to deliver rice to the cooperative, where they received payment. However, separate incomes prevailed in this area, and women increasingly resorted to the blackmarketing of rice to meet their responsibilities.

3. Although women household heads are not legally barred from access to extension, in practice, they are avoided. This is in part due to the virtual nonexistence of women agricultural extension staff in societies where contact between unrelated men and women is contrary to cultural norms. This means that extension systems do not reach those who do the farm work.

A study in BOTSWANA indicated that three-fourths of farms with a man present acquired seed from extension workers, while only a quarter of female managed farms.

In KENYA, study found that women had less access to all types of agricultural services, including extension visits, group demonstration plots, training opportunities, and loan receipt, even when controlled for land size and income. The more valuable the service, the greater were gaps between men and women managers. Farms with a man present, for example, were fourteen times as likely to have acquired, applied for, or have detailed awareness of loan application procedures.

Although women are a quarter of all farm managers and do most farm work, a study of the National Maize Program in 27 villages in TANZANIA indicates women were only eight per cent of the participants.

4. Women headed households are disproportionately concentrated at low income levels. The women's ability to meet family responsibilities is further reduced by limited access to other resources, such as land during land reform processes or similar employment and educational opportunities to those of men.

The Agricultural Land Reform Law of 1961 in COLOMBIA provided for redistribution of lands to the needy. Needy persons were defined as married males of at least 18 years of age. This automatic exclusion from access to land further disadvantaged female household heads.

CASE STUDY: DEPARTMENT OF THE EAST, UPPER VOLTA

by Grace Hemmings, Yale University

This case study of eastern Upper Volta, containing material relevant to items on the FAO agenda, is based on thirty months of fieldwork. While no one example is representative of all areas, a case study provides the kind of in-depth analysis necessary to understand and plan for development interventions.

Women's Work in the Area

Eastern Upper Volta is characterized by interdependence between men and women in agricultural work. Except for clearing fields, women participate in all agricultural tasks alongside men, with planting and weeding predominating. Families—i.e. both men and women—cultivate a common plot of millet and sorghum, while individual men and women cultivate their own plot of millet, maize, cotton, peanuts, and other crops.

Under the traditional system, access to land for production is guaranteed to women, and denial is considered a serious offense.

Women market processed food, manufacture and sell crafts. Trading activities involve a long chain of investment decisions. For example, women sell peanuts to purchase rice, and then after laborious manual processing, dehull rice and resell it at higher prices, from which profits are invested in flour to make processed food to sell in markets. Those profits are later reinvested in tobacco and kola nut to store and sell during hardship season.

The Dynamics of Development & Change

Development programs are often in conflict with existing social values, requiring alterations in villager behavior beyond that acceptable. Extended family units—large units of agricultural production—no longer provide the labor and support that was true of only a generation past. Interdependence between husbands and wives has increased, yet development programs and employment opportunities have emphasized men. Technology is virtually always introduced to men, without regard for women's labor contributions and the added labor burdens that result. Extension and training programs have limited sensitivity to women's special situation, and both rigid time and instructional requirements of extension and group projects aggravate women's labor responsibilities.

This paper was prepared for the
Office of Women in Development
U.S. Agency for International Development
Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20523

Paper available Fall, 1979
Abstract drafted by KASTaudt, 6/19/79

Partly due to animal-drawn plow technology, husband-wife communal fields have expanded in acreage, and women devote more time and labor to this field compared to past generations. As extended families constrict and husband-wife interdependence increases, women's labor contributions have grown. Women's labor input is particularly high when men migrate for seasonal, off-farm employment. While husbands provide the family with grain, proceeds from this communal field belong to the man. Husbands and wives do not share the remaining cash income, nor income from personal fields and employment. Yet women supply cash for their own and their children's needs. At the same time that women's labor expands on communal fields, less time remains for her personal field, off which food is marketed during dry season.

The following example illustrates how development projects can negatively affect development dynamics. A Private Voluntary Organization developed an irrigation project, making land parcels available to those working on the project. Project authorities determined that only men should provide labor, and therefore, only men own the land parcels. Now men alone have built up lucrative businesses from off-season onion, rice, and vegetable production in the irrigated fields.

General Policy Implications

1. Planning requires detailed attention to existing social values as well as to how labor is organized along these values within a community. In one project example, groups were organized on a first come, first served basis. Normally, cooperative labor is based on more profound relations--such as kinship or friendship--than order of interest or desires to make profits, leading to limited project success.
2. Technology, tools, and ideas requiring larger-scale capital investment than usual mean that villages can no longer maintain self-sufficiency. Such investment creates a dependency on repair services, spare parts, and cash for upkeep.
3. Individuals affected by development projects must participate in needs assessments. If project teams discuss issues with authority figures, they will probably exclude women and women's interests. Good project design should be sensitive to prevailing informal communication patterns.

Policy Implications Specific to Women

1. Project activities should contain greater balance and equity--for men and women, and for the privileged and non-privileged--in access to the advantages of development.
2. The advantages of technology should be available to both men and women, and specifically addressed to lightening women's labor burdens for productive activity.
3. In eastern Upper Volta, men and women collaborate in all aspects of production. Therefore, sexually integrated cooperatives should be promoted, rather than separate-sex cooperatives.
4. Extension staff should be recruited from within the village, particularly focusing on older women who have fewer time constraints and long-standing respect in villages.

WOMEN'S LEGAL ACCESS TO AGRARIAN RESOURCES

by Christina Chlora Jones

Land reforms symbolize a commitment on the part of governments to distribute agrarian wealth more equitably. Through changes in property, marriage, and inheritance law, economic equality can become a reality for men and women.

Legal Access of Women to Agrarian Resources

Women's access to agrarian resources takes the form of either full ownership or usufructuary rights. Full ownership rights in certain societies (i.e. Islamic) are limited to shares less than those male relatives receive, or the rights are determined by the head of the family, usually a male. Usufructuary rights are becoming more and more limited where land has become a marketable commodity, as in Africa.

Often the right to own land does not result in control over its disposition. Rights to land do not always result in control over land. Reasons for this are listed below, along with case examples.

i. Lack of Direct Legal Safeguards

In cases where ownership of property is in fractional shares and disposition of the land can be implemented only by consensus of the shareholders, the local Court can be petitioned (i.e., Tunisia), when a consensus is not forthcoming or possible, for a decision. In these cases, an enterprising woman can be prevented from economically profiting from her share. However, at the same time, she is protected if social customs prevent her from owning land exclusively.

In Tanzania, landholding rights are sex-neutral by law. However, the law also requires that only one person succeed as holder, and the Courts determine whom it shall be. In such cases, a widow or daughter's right to succeed is left to the discretion of the Courts for there is no written basis in law. This is insufficient safeguard for the women.

ii. Insufficient Right of Women to Succession or Acquisition

In Colombia, land is distributed to the needy who are defined as married males of at least 18 years of age. Such male landowners could sell only to other married males. Upon the male landowner's death, his heirs could sell the land if they could not exploit it themselves. This offers no protection to widows or daughters unable to exploit the land by themselves. Moreover, no provision is made to permit them to continue exploitation by using hired labor.

In the Philippines, there is no provision for common law wives to be qualified as heirs to property.

This paper was prepared for the
Office of Women in Development
U.S. Agency for International Development
Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20523

Paper available Fall, 1979
Abstract drafted by AMarquez, 6/21/79

iii. Customs Override Egalitarian-Minded Laws

In Morocco, with its 50% divorce rate, a divorced woman is entitled to a share from her father's estate and a widow is entitled to a share from both her husband's and father's estates. However, in practice, the husband is given control over the wife's share of her relatives' property and the brother is given control over an unmarried sister's relatives' property. Thus, dependence of women on the husbands, fathers and brothers is perpetuated.

In Egypt, consistency in deciding succession has been omitted from the law with regard to women. Although succession to land is not limited to men or women, it is to be decided either by the family involved or by a government committee, allowing for either social prejudice against women to reign when the family is deciding or unpredictable discretion when the government committee is deciding.

iv. Interpretation or Decision in Hands of the Male

Under a tenancy reform in the Philippines, a landlord chooses the successor among the spouse or descendants of an original leaseholder (who had the right to apply the leasehold rent toward the purchase of the land). Therefore, a son could be chosen over the mother.

In Kenya, distribution of a deceased's estate is left to the Courts who abide by the decision of the headman and relatives' consensus. Women inherit only if the children or elders agree to it, and even then, she only holds the land in trust for her children. Male relatives may challenge her trusteeship if they question her management of the land.

Policy Implications

1. Legislate guidelines on safeguarding wives' or daughters' rights in land which they farmed or helped to farm during the life of the deceased husband or father. They should not have to rely on the good will of the Courts.
2. Allow women the option of being made liable for the maintenance of the family as the man presently is (allowing her then to be able to inherit and acquire land). Thus not only will duties be made equal, regardless of the financial capacity, but the capacity to fulfill those duties will be equalized.
3. Legislate provisions that common law wives, who contribute the value of their labor to a man's wealth, receive their share upon divorce or separation.
4. Provide the protection of law for women holding land in guardianship or trusteeship for their children from such land being transferred out of her control.
5. Provide women aid for improving their management skills (i.e. vocational and land management training), and include the study of legal rights in agricultural vocational curricula.
6. Conform divorce laws to land reform laws; i.e., provide that the wife receive that portion of land equivalent in value to the value of the improvements she contributed during their marriage and the value of her food-producing labor.
7. Improve women's access to adjudication, and educate women as to their legal rights regardless of social practices.
8. Make economic equality a principle of the legal system.

NEW MODELS FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH & EXTENSION:

THE NEED TO INTEGRATE WOMEN

by Jacqueline Ashby, Cornell University

This study reviews existing literature on women's access to education, training, and extension. Such programs aim to communicate technical information and training of farmers in new agricultural practices. Women are an integral part of agricultural production, yet extension systems are designed as if women were only an insignificant (or nonexistent) part of the agricultural clientele.

Women's Agricultural Work

Women work extensively in agriculture, particularly in planting, weeding, harvesting, storing, processing, and trading crops. According to U.N./ECA estimates, women perform an equal to majority of agricultural work in three-fourths of all African societies. U.N./ECLA estimates that women provide about two-fifths of all agricultural labor in Latin America. In case studies of India, estimates are that women provide one-fifth to one-half of all family farm labor and a third of agricultural wage labor. Even in Moslem areas where women are secluded, women participate in field production, small animal care, and trade through intermediaries.

Women's Access to Education, Training & Extension

Planners assume that farmers are men, that husbands communicate agricultural information to wives, and that men provide for families. Such assumptions are invalid in many societies. The difficulties that arise from assumptions like these are particularly acute for female-headed households, who are estimated to number between a quarter to a third of all rural households.

Programs for women are characterized by a limited correspondence between the variety of women's agricultural tasks, and the type of training they receive. In a study of Moslem women in Comilla district, Bangladesh, a majority of women's time for seven months of the year was devoted to threshing, drying, cleaning, and husking rice; jute processing; care of poultry and livestock; fruit and vegetable gardening; fishing; and food preservation. Yet in the annual reports on the nearly 200 courses at the Academy for Rural Development from 1971-73, 86% of the courses were health and family related, 12% were about handicrafts, and 2% were on poultry and kitchen gardening.

As indicated by UNESCO surveys and other studies of extension programs, sex-segregated extension programs persist in many countries, which stress women's domestic tasks at the expense of agricultural tasks. Agricultural staff are

This paper was prepared for the Office
of Women in Development, U.S. Agency for
International Development, Department of
State, Washington, D.C. 20523

Paper available Fall, 1979

Abstract drafted by K.A. Staudt, 6/19/79

overwhelmingly men, often seeking contact with men. Several case study surveys, each with 200 or more households interviewed, bear out this tendency. In Botswana, a quarter of female farm managers acquired seed from extension agents, compared to three-fourths of farm with a man present. In Tanzania, discussions between extension agents and farmers about agricultural recommendations were with 'husbands only' in nearly two-fifths of the cases, whereas with 'wives only' in only 7% of the cases. In western Kenya, where knowledge about government supported agricultural credit depends on contact with extension agents, only 1% of female farm managers knew of or applied for credit, in contrast to 15% of farms with a man present.

General Policy Implications

1. Increases in agricultural productivity should be equitably distributed.
2. Adaptive research is necessary to develop technology appropriate to the diverse constraints under which low-income farmers operate.
3. Increased participation of all farmers is essential in all stages of technology development and extension. Explicit attention should be given to a two-way information and communication system, where information and training is delivered to farmers, and farmer needs and use of technology is fed back to agricultural researchers and extension staff.
4. Knowledge about post-harvest storing and processing is critical to the development of technology and extension strategies. For example, women rejected hybrid maize varieties in Nepal due to inferior milling and storage qualities. Such rejection was a rational response and one which can be readdressed through improved research and extension.

Policy Implications Specific to Women

1. Project designers must be sensitive to the sex division of labor, differences in access to resources between men and women, and women's special labor and time constraints. For example, although women contribute labor to production, men may control cash proceeds from that labor. Women's work incentives, consequently, will be affected, and program strategies requiring increased female labor face limited success. In the Animation Project of Niger, women refused to plant fruit trees which would belong to husbands, preferring instead to invest in livestock which women could legally own.
2. More female staff are necessary to develop effective communication with women. In many societies there are distinct communication channels for each sex. Though women may be a majority of farmers, ironically, the pool of women to draw from for recruitment to training is small, due to sex disparities in access to formal education. Vigorous recruitment efforts should be complemented with paraprofessional training, drawing on mature women with no or low literacy levels into extension staff.
3. Planners should consider grafting agricultural extension onto existing women's groups. Groups provide peer support for making decisions and taking action, and effective groups can enhance local capacity to pressure government agencies to meet and sustain program needs. In societies where women's voice in public activities is curtailed, and where women are publicly deferential to men, separate women's groups, rather than sexually integrated groups should be promoted until such time that integration will allow meaningful participation for all.

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF AGRARIAN REFORM & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

by Ruth Dixon, University of California at Davis

Growing landlessness, displacement of labor by mechanization, and increased population density make obvious the need for non-agricultural employment in rural areas. While agrarian reforms which increase overall employment will increase the demand for female labor, measures must be taken to ensure that women's special circumstances are taken into account and that women are not adversely affected by the reform.

Women Workers

According to U.N./ILO data from fifty-six countries classified on a regional basis, women's proportional participation in the labor force is highest in sub-saharan Africa and South and Southeast Asian countries, with mean rates of 34% and 32%, respectively. In Central and South American countries, almost a quarter of the labor force is female, while around 10%, in North African and Mideast countries. Nevertheless, statistics render women's work in the household and in the informal economic sectors to near invisibility. Some censuses classify women's work as "unpaid family labor"--still problematic, since agricultural goods produced primarily for consumption rather than exchange are usually excluded.

In all parts of the world, women's work both forms part of household income and reduces family cash expenditures through the provision of unpaid services. Land and population density increase the tendency for women to seek cash income which supplements household income. At the same time, technology often displaces women from agricultural roles or increases productivity gaps between men and women. Women are also less likely to own land, and upon their husband's death, vulnerable to eviction or foreclosure. Thus, employment generating opportunities are critical to reaching the poor majority.

Modernization of an activity may be more efficient and thus should not be opposed on the grounds that it takes the activity out of women's hands. Rather, intermediate technology which can be controlled and operated by women should be adopted so that women can still participate in the production of the good or service. With adequate supporting services, there are many activities in which women can maintain or gain an important role: food processing, manufacturing traditional or modern goods, constructing rural infrastructure, selling and trading goods, and delivering basic health care services as paramedics and midwives.

This paper was prepared for the
Office of Women in Development
U.S. Agency for International Development
Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20523

Paper available Fall, 1979

Abstract drafted by KASTaudt;CNethercut, 6/21/79

Strategies and Policy Implications

A strategy for creating women's income-generating employment in rural areas involves six major tasks.

1. Identify the poorest regions of a country and within each region, identify the poorest women who need income-generating employment.
2. Study the current economic activities of women to determine the possibility of increasing their output and income-generating capacity. This study may reveal that their skills and resources could be more profitably used in another productive activity.
3. Locate indigenous social networks as the basis for mobilizing women to work together. Many advantages accrue from women working in groups instead of individually, including: the ability to exploit economies of scale; easier access to credit and technical assistance; experience in collective decision-making; creation of a base for political action; and increased opportunities for literacy, technical and health care classes. The advantages of basing cooperatives on indigenous social networks is that members already know and trust each other—a basis for enhancing success in cooperative ventures.
[Work in central workplaces, rather than homes, should be stressed. In a central workplace, women transcend the isolation of their household and build self-confidence while acquiring skills. A central workplace also provides a setting for delivering services such as literacy classes, health care, and accounting, among others. Finally, employment in a central workplace permits better enforcement of minimum wage and working conditions.]
4. Develop channels which will target technical assistance and credit to the small scale and group enterprises. Since these services do not often reach the poor and women, special action needs to be taken to assure that women receive the loans and counseling they need for the successful organizational and financial management of cooperatives.
5. Discover ways to reduce the time and energy women expend on the most difficult or time-consuming activities. If women are not freed from these activities, then they will not be able to take advantage of income-generating employment, even if it is available. Collective work groups might be able to do this work more efficiently, or the work may be transformed into a small industry and source of employment.
6. Identify and eliminate the cultural and structural obstacles that deny women access to employment or control over the products of their labor. Among these obstacles are: social taboos against women working; women's lack of skills; sex-stereotyping of jobs which keep women in low-paid female jobs; and the custom of a women's wages or output going to her husband instead of to herself.

[The views and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and should not be attributed to the Agency for International Development or to any individual acting in its behalf]

Prepared for the U.N. FAO World Conference on Agrarian Reform & Rural Development by Fran Hill, 6/79 for the Office of Women in Development. U.S. Agency for International Development, Dept. of State, Washington, D.C. 20523

Women Agricultural Producers: Industrial & Non-industrial Societies

American farm women and women in other parts of the world face many different situations. There is no one global "sisterhood" of contexts, problems, and recommended policies. Yet, women in both industrial and non-industrial societies face some similar challenges as agricultural producers. These commonalities deserve attention at the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development.

1. Women's roles as agricultural producers are defined by both kinship and contract. Women may have ownership or useright to land primarily as the wives or other kin of the male owners or users. In the United States, farm women have to pay inheritance tax or gift tax on the so-called family farms they have worked on along with their husbands. Little attention has been given in any society to defining the legal rights of the individuals within kinship units. Kinship structures may well protect these individual members. However, as more aspects of life become matters of formal contract rather than family and kinship regulation, the protection offered by these units becomes less inclusive and less secure. American farm women have found that the good intentions of their kin are no substitute for the clarification of their legal positions.
2. Women's contributions are often not perceived as "work" because they may have little immediate commercial value. This is again linked to the problem of having women's labor embedded in kinship units like the 'family farm' in which individual contributions are not clear. This is true whether there is a sexual division of actual labor tasks or not. On American family farms, women may do the same jobs as their husbands, but men 'work' and women only 'help'. This assumption is codified in American law. In other societies such as East Africa, women produce many crops but men market them. The results of women's labor devolve to the kin group.
3. These problems have been exacerbated as public policies have become more important in shaping agriculture, in determining who farms and who does not. Public policies also assume individual rights rather than kinship structures. As these individual rights are delineated more clearly, women have less opportunity for the use of informal power. Women lose both their kin-defined domains as well as failing to be included in the beneficiaries of public programs. In the United States as well as in the third world, men attend meetings, women do agricultural work, but only men are considered farmers. Provision of credit for land or agricultural inputs assumes a male, not a female farmer in most countries.
4. Issues of women's roles in agriculture are more complex than questions of equal access. The entire structure of agriculture is changing around the world toward larger, more capital-intensive units. Women are less likely to play a role in these units--either as operators or as members of operating kin groups--than they are to play a role in smaller units. Women will be affected differently than men by the trend toward the separation of ownership and labor in agriculture. Women may not find opportunities as either owners or workers. At the same time, the trend from local to national to global markets also seems likely to erode women's positions.