

Gender Mainstreaming in Agriculture

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Abstract

Gender mainstreaming is the process by which narrowing the gap in development opportunities between men and women and working towards equality between them become an essential part of the organizational strategy, policies and operations. The aim is to develop interventions that overcome barriers preventing men and women having equal access to the resources and services they need to improve their livelihood. Present paper aim is to discuss the role of gender mainstreaming in agriculture.

Keywords: Gender; Mainstreaming; Agriculture.

INTRODUCTION

Men and Women are two necessary wheels of cart of life. One cannot exist without other. The progress and opulence of truly reliant on women. Women are playing remarkable role in all field of life. According to World Food Programme Women constitute more than 50 per cent of total population, own one per cent of women wealth and 550 million

women live below poverty line. According to *Census, 2011* literacy among women in India was 52.2 per cent and literacy rate of women is 75.8 per cent. This shows a gap of 21.6 per cent among men and women. According to Draft National Policy for Women in Agriculture 2008, women constitute 40 per cent of Agriculture workforce and this per cent is rising. Currently 53 per cent of male workers and 75 per cent female workers and 85 per cent of female workers are in Agriculture. *UNEP (2004)* reported that men and women play distinct role in managing plants and animals, forest, dry land, wetland and Agriculture. According to *Tinker and Jacquette, 1987* women environment concerns were first highlighted in 1975, the International Women Year, which was declared in honor of the 25th anniversary of United Nations Commission on status of Women.

Essential of Gender Need

Attention to gender is essential to sound development practices and at the heart of economic

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and social progress. Development results cannot be maximized and sustained without explicit recognition that every policy, programme and project affects women and men differently. Gender needs should be part of the overall policy framework which can ensure policy, programme and project address the difference in experiences and situations among men and women. Equal participation of women in social and political issues articulate their needs and lives. Gender sensitive issues should be taken under consideration to enhance development programme. (*Mishra, 2003*). Gender relation is also very important. Analysis of 102 USAID projects depict that project are more successful with participation of women. Women tradition or indigenous knowledge should not be left out as this contribute in development of Nation. According to *Tyagi, 2000* Women's knowledge, skill, their traditional values and experiences must be recognized. Women views, opinions, needs, problems, priorities must be addressed in National and International agenda.

Gender strategy and Gender mainstreaming

The concept of Gender strategy for promoting gender equality in the platform for Action adopts at the United Nation fourth World conference on Women, held in Beijing, China in 1995. It highlighted the necessity to ensure that gender equality is the primal goal in all areas of social and economic development. Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implication for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, programme in any area and at all level. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as men an integral part of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programme in political, economic and social spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality. (*ILO, 2007*). Gender mainstreaming means taking into account the perspective, role and responsibilities of men and women in development initiatives. It involves integrating an understanding of gender and gender power relation in all department, projects and process rather than just designing projects that target women. This means exploring the gender issues in sector such as infrastructure which may appear as if they affect all people equally irrespective of gender or any other differences. (*UNESCO, 1997*). According to *Razavi and Miller, 1995* In the International development circles, Gender and Development approach was the new paradigm. A focus on gender meant that

development had to tackle the socially defined causes of women's subordination and the existing power relations between women and men. At the UN 4th World conference on women in Beijing in 1995, gender mainstreaming approach was countersigned by 189 countries while the UN member countries adopted by consensus, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Some affirmative approaches of gender mainstreaming are:

1. It considers men and women are complementary forces and not as opposite forces.
2. It is an umbrella approach that target gender inequality policies.
3. It has a broad scope to address all kind of development setting from poverty alleviation to environmental protection.
4. It aims as institutional restructuring for sustainable development on gender in equality.

Challenges and Objectives of gender mainstreaming

The challenge of gender mainstreaming is to build new partnership between men and women and to ensure that both participate fully on all areas and the benefits of programme are equally distributed among men. It is a comprehensive strategy aimed at achieving greater gender equality. This is possible through integrating a gender perspective into existing institution, programme and activities. (*Moser, 1995*). The objectives of gender mainstreaming are to reduce gender inequalities that may exist in a given areas, encourage both men and women to jointly participate in finding solution to their problems, ensure that their specific needs are satisfy. Millennium Development goals which were adopted in the Millennium Summit of United Nations in 2000 and validated by 189 United Nations member states also emphasized on gender issues. Promote gender equality and empower women was the third goal of MDGs. The foresight of the Millennium Declaration and the eight development Millennium Development Goals is to develop a more just and equal access for women along with men is paramount to the attainment of all MDGs.

Women involvement in Decision Making Process

Ghosh and Adhikary (1988) reported that women were getting least importance in decision making process except borrowing money, seed storage and some of the practices related to livestock to be

raised, selling of livestock and care of calves. In the area of animal health most of the decisions were taken jointly. *Kumari et.al. (1988)* concluded that 80 per cent of all important dairying operations in dairy milk production were performed by women. Their involvement in all livestock activities was found to be more as compared to their involvement in crop husbandry practices. *Sardana (1988)* observed that Indian farm women are playing a dominant role in eight agricultural activities. In descending order these are tending dairy cattle, collecting fodder from the field, selling livestock produce, storage of farm produce, weeding operations, management of cattle treatment, harvesting of crops and making of farming and manure significantly, livestock related activities were pronounced and farm women had virtually monopolized the cattle care operations to the extent of almost 95 per cent. *Moser (1989)* reported women's participation in community work as a triple role along with the productive and reproductive roles. *Bala et.al. (1993)* reported that women have been practically playing a significant role in most of the household decision from the routine domestic decision to the very important decision relating to livestock and credit etc. Their involvement is less significant in those spheres where physical participation is less. *Patil and Sawant (1996)* reported that even though rural women play a dominant role in carrying out various Agricultural operations, she was not free to take her own decision. *Alagamani (1999)* cited in his study that rural women were involved to the extent of 73 per cent regarding decision concerning household consumption. *Kumari (2002)* cited in her study that in term of independent decision making, 49.6 per cent had a lead over women (16%) in the field of money related decision and about 34.40 per cent of money related decisions were taken jointly.

Gender Sensitivity and Constraints faced by women

Mamba (1984) reported that constraints in farm women performance were:

1. Insufficient data on women farmers for use by planners.
2. Female headed households suffered from capital and labour shortages.
3. Women farmers were neglected by extension and credit staff.
4. Very few extension agents and husbands were often unwilling to allow their wives to work with male extensions.
5. All women could not attend training centres or group meetings and remained unrecalled by extension agents.

Jaiswal (1998) cited that no knowledge of Agriculture technology was perceived by women as major constraint. *Ross (2009)* identified lack of access the financial services, lack of entrepreneurship and managerial skill, low management, low level livelihood which affect their ability to accumulate capital for investment. *Khan et.al. (2012)* reported that lack of training, lack of capital, complexity of loan procedure, lack of training, irrigation facility were perceived as major constraints in farm activities.

CONCLUSION

Gender is an important concept as it influence the interaction of men and women in the society. There are some obstacles created by gender inequalities, men and women make different assessments on the participation yet still women has less time to spare for participation, men and women have different level of literacy and participation in the field.

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