

Gender-Based Constraints in Smallholder Farming and Policy Implementation Challenges

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CONTEXT

- Uncertainties and women's burden in agriculture has increased due to climate change, COVID-19 and male labor migration.
- In Nepal, COVID-19 has impacted women's social and economic capabilities¹ who were already experiencing the disproportionate brunt of climate change².
- In such a context, efforts directed towards increasing women's capacity for higher productivity and strengthening their technical and financial knowledge is crucial.
- There are several gender and social-inclusion related policies in Nepal's agricultural sector, yet there exists various implementation challenges.
- Agriculture Developments Strategy, 2015 of Nepal stipulates for gender-inclusive policies, inclusive economy and increased access to climate smart agriculture technologies for women, and smallholder farmers³.

OBJECTIVES

- Identify Gender-Based Constraints
- Review of existing policies, identify policy gaps and implementation challenges

METHODS



RESULTS

Case studies of two districts

Case 1: *Haat bazaar* (local weekly market) reopening of Arghakhanchii

Context

- Crucial platform for marketing of vegetable for smallholder farmers, mostly women vegetable growers.
- Closed since the restrictions imposed at the start of COVID-19 and could not reopen post the pandemic.
- With the closure of this market and limited access to market places, farmers either had to reduce their production or sell vegetables in almost half the price to the intermediaries.
- Although the management of *haat bazaar* comes under the authority of municipality, they seemed reluctant to reopen the market.



Policy interventions

- Issues of smallholder women farmers discussed in multi-stakeholder forums where farmers shared their painful stories to stakeholders.
- Regular engagement with municipality, marketing groups and farmers for reopening and functioning of the weekly market.

Early Outcomes

- Reformation of marketing group involving some active social actors and small farmer's representatives .
- Reopening of *haat bazaar* has increased access to market, income and networking of smallholder farmers.
- Management responsibility of the weekly market has been handed over to the marketing group.
- Ownership of *haat bazaar* issue taken by the municipality and have also assured to formulate a *haat bazaar* management policy.



Case II: Institutional strengthening of cooperative for women empowerment in Ramechhap

Context

- Time poverty, limited mobility of women to access market, low bargaining power, limited access to finance identified as some of the existing Gender Based Constraints.
- Limited women's participation in social networking like cooperatives resulting in their limited access to technology, financial services and knowledge.

Policy interventions

- Strengthened governance of cooperative (executive committee reformation, trainings)
- Regular engagement with local government, financial institutions and other service providers to share the cooperative's progress, challenges and solicit a commitment of support from them.



Early Outcomes

- Management skills of cooperative improved through cooperative management training.
- Six policies ensuring gender inclusivity and equity with the cooperative's operation have been developed.
- Cooperative diversifying its function from saving and credit to marketing of agri-products.
- Meaningful participation of women farmers at executive level and membership of women increased.
- Nine women sub-committees have been formed involving 135 members to focus on sectors of farming, loan monitoring, education, etc.
- Increased confidence level of women: better access to inputs, price and technology.



KEY MESSAGE

- Engagement with grassroots organization is crucial to address GBCs and policy implementation challenges.
- Interest and influence of powerful actors can pose a challenge in translating policy provision to practice.
- Multistakeholder forum and continuous engagements can trigger reflection among stakeholders including government agencies, and can lead to devising inclusive and equitable policies and programs.
- Sensitization of women and their capacity development is essential to amplify their voices.

CHALLENGES

- Securing continuous support for *haat bazaar* management from the municipality.
- Large farmer's reluctance to reopen *haat bazaar* might cause inconvenience for the smooth functioning of market.
- Policy implementation challenge of the cooperative.

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