Social Cultural Factors that Constraint Gender Mainstreaming in Agriculture Extension

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Abstract

Agricultural development has been a major concern to most developing countries within the last two decades. It represents a cluster of six related but separate concepts: agricultural expansion, increased production per acre of cropped land or per head of livestock, agricultural growth, a situation characterized with agricultural products per agricultural worker, rising income per person employed and agricultural transformation. Agriculture is considered the mainstay of economy in most of the African countries and Kenya in particular,
employing more than 70% of the population. Agricultural extension is the application of scientific research and new knowledge to agricultural practices through farmer’s education. Agricultural extension services can potentially be provided by three main sources namely: the public, the private non-profit sector, and the private for-profit sector. The role of women comes into sharp focus when discussing extension as a means of dissemination of agricultural technology to the farming household. This is because women have been sidelined and denied control over productive resources necessary for their livelihood activities and impact on the entire society. Gender is the range of physical, biological, mental and behavioral characteristics pertaining to differentiating between masculinity and feminity. It can also be defined as a culturally specific set of characteristics that identifies the social behavior of women and men and the relationship between them, i.e. it is a socially constructed relationships men and women. To mainstream gender is to integrate gender concerns into every aspect of an organization’s priorities and procedures or the process of assessing the implications of men or women of any planned action including legislation, policies or programs in all areas and at all levels. Empowering women is empowering the entire community. This paper therefore explores the social cultural factors that constraints gender mainstreaming in agricultural extension.

**Keywords:** Social-cultural, Gender mainstreaming, Agricultural extension
Introduction
Kenya’s agricultural sector is critical to the country’s development as a foundation towards sustained economic growth capable of moving Kenya into middle-income level nations. The sector contributes about 24 percent of the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 60 percent of the total export earnings. Through links with manufacturing, distribution, and the service sector, agriculture indirectly contributes a further 27 percent of the country’s GDP. The sector contributes about 45 percent of the government revenue, besides supplying over 75 percent of the raw materials for industrial use. It also supports close to 80 percent of the country’s population which lives in the rural areas and derives its livelihood from agriculture and related activities (MOA, 2012).

Gender mainstreaming
Gender mainstreaming was established as a major global strategy for the promotion of gender equality in the Beijing platform for action from fourth United Nations, world conference on women in Beijing in 1995. The Ecosoc agreed conclusions (1997/2) established some important overall principles for gender mainstreaming from the. A letter from the secretary general to all United Nations entries, (13th OCT 1997), provided further concrete directives. The general assembly twenty-third special session to allow up implementation of the Beijing platform for action, (June 2000), enhanced the mainstreaming mandate within the United Nations. More recently the Economic and Social Council adopted a resolution (ECOSOC Resolution, 2001/41) on gender mainstreaming (2001), which calls on the Economic and Social Council to ensure that gender perspectives are taken into account in all its work, including in the work of its functional commissions and recommends a five-year review of the implementations of the ECOSOC agreed conclusions, 1997/2.

The ECOSOC agreed conclusions, (1997/2), defines gender mainstreaming as the process of assessing the implications for men
and women of any planned actions including legislation policies or programmes in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality. Gender mainstreaming entails bringing the perceptions, experience, knowledge and interests of women as well as men to bear on policy-making, planning and decision-making. Mainstreaming should situate gender equality issues at the center of analysis and policy decisions, medium term plans, programme budgets and institutional structures and processes. This requires explicit systematic attention to relevant gender perspectives in all areas of the work of the United Nations. Mainstreaming can reveal a need for changes in goals, strategies and actions to ensure that both men and women can influence, participate in and benefit from development processes. This may lead to changes in organizational environments which are conducive to the promotion of gender equality. However, a number of persistent constraints remain to be addressed.

**Problem statement**

From traditional patterns of work distribution, in most developing countries women are responsible to meet the basic needs of the family. They produce food for household consumption and for the local market, whereas men more often work in agricultural wage labour and cash crop production. Generally, women are responsible for food selection and preparation, and for the care and feeding of the children, and therefore play a key role in defining the coping strategies of poor households to ensure food security and to reduce risk. Women normally spend a higher share of their income than men on providing food, health and education to the family. (GIZ 2013). Additionally, they are responsible for fetching water and domestic fuel.
Alongside the above responsibilities for reproductive tasks, women are also engaged in productive tasks such as agricultural work, raising cattle, seed management, planting, as well as the processing and marketing of agricultural products. In livestock farming, women feed the animals, clean the stalls and compost manure. The activities performed by women are often unpaid. Conflict, disease, HIV/AIDS and the migration of male family members to urban areas are forcing more and more women to take on additional roles that were originally performed by men, with many assuming sole responsibility for agricultural production. In Kenya 34% of households are headed by women. (KDHS 2008) yet only 5 percent of land in Kenya is registered jointly with women and only 1 percent is registered by women alone (Kenya Land Alliance, 2006& World Bank Report, 2007).

Land titles are still the most common form of loan collateral, particularly for loans above microfinance ceilings. They are part of the requirements for contract farming, therefore this locks out many women from maximizing their potential in farm level productivity.

However, in spite of their important and diverse contributions, women in agriculture and rural areas have less access than men to productive resources. Gender inequality is present in many assets, inputs and services: e.g. access to or control over land, financial services, productive resources, and extension or marketing services. Similar gaps exist in accessing new technologies, and extension services (UNDP 2012). Several studies have shown that gender inequality related to food security is exacerbated during crises: Women tend to become the “shock absorbers” of household food security, e.g. skipping meals, to make more food available for other household members. It is from the above background that this study is therefore explores the socio-cultural factors that constraints gender mainstreaming in agricultural extension
Objective of the study
Was to explore the socio-cultural factors that constraint gender mainstreaming in agricultural extension

Specific objectives
1. Establish factors that constraint gender mainstreaming in agricultural extension
2. Examine the role of gender in agricultural development

Literature review
Gender inequalities undermine agricultural productivity
Emerging empirical evidence shows that gender inequalities impact negatively on families and the larger economy, a finding supported by emerging macroeconomic analyses on Africa by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the World Bank, a study by these three institutions concludes that gender inequality is both an economic and social issues and that greater gender could be a potent force for accelerated poverty reduction in Africa (ECA, 2004). Comparative evidence from Kenya suggests that men’s gross value of output per hectare is 8 percent higher than women’s. However, if women had the same human capital endowments and used the same amounts of factors and inputs as men, the value of their output would increase by some 22 percent. Similar results have been recorded in other countries such as Tanzania, Burkina Faso and Zambia.

Gender and Growth: Missed potential
Burkina Faso: Shifting existing resources between men’s and women’s plots within the same household could increase output by 10-20 percent.
Kenya: Giving women farmers the same level of agricultural inputs and education as men could increase yields obtained by women by more than 20 percent.

Tanzania: Reducing time burdens of women could increase household cash incomes for smallholder coffee and banana growers by 10 percent, labour productivity by 44 percent.

Zambia: If women enjoyed the same overall level of capital investment in agricultural inputs including land, as their male counterparts output in Zambia could increase by up to 15 percent (Blackden and Bhanu, 1999). Soito et al (1994) concludes that if these results held are true in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) as a whole, simply raising the productivity of women to the level as men could increase total production by 10 to 15 percent. Because ignoring gender so significantly undermines agricultural productivity welfare of families and the larger economy it is critical that gender mainstreaming becomes central to planning and resource allocation.

Kenya’s constitution 2010-gains for women

The passing of the Kenya’s 2010 constitutions paved the way for Kenyan women to allow them claim what they have been struggling for since time immemorial. Laws that protect, uphold and recognize women in Kenya in areas of political participation, representation, property ownership, citizenship and entitlement to maintenance expenses in cases of divorce and separation have been realized.

Some of the gains of women in the constitution are as follows:

Women and men will have the right to equal treatment and opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres without discrimination .Article 27(3)

Chapter Five Part 1: on legislation of land The Constitution reiterates on the elimination of gender discrimination in law,
customs and practices related to land and property inland. Article 60(1)(f) and Article 68 (iii)

Chapter Seven: Representation of the people: Part 1 – Electoral system and process: General principles for the electoral system. The Constitution maintains a one third requirement for either gender in elective public bodies giving women of Kenya at least one third in elective public bodies. Article 81(b) and Article 91(f)

All the previous struggles and efforts made by women led to the realization of their rights and freedoms. However there is still a long way to go to fully realize the women rights as well as gender equality. Legal frameworks to operationalise the constitutional requirements will take some time before they are enacted. An example is the women representation per county in the national assembly, critics have pointed that the additional number is yet to realise any felt benefits. In leadership, the share of women to men in elective position is still low at 6%.
Table 1: Selected Leadership Positions in Kenya

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet secretaries</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal secretaries</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Personnel</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County secretaries</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Assembly Clerks</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCAs</td>
<td>1361</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1459</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>632</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governors</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Governors</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of National Assembly</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senators</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: NGEC Annual Report 2013)

There are many factors leading to the scenarios mentioned above, the factors are low levels of education, socio cultural such as traditional governance structures such as the clan and eldership. The electoral process contributed as well to the low number, for a woman to decide to go for an elective position, she will need to seek permission from the family, and they have to seek for nominations in the political parties which in most instances are headed by men. To conduct successful campaigns, candidates need a lot of resources which is a challenge to women and they have to balance this with their other roles.

Research Methodology

Study Design

This study adopted descriptive design. According to Bickman and Rog (1998), despcrptive study which essentially employs descriptive research design can answer, what is and what was questions. This design was appropriate for the study since the information about farming was gathered from farmers using
questionnaires while secondary data were collect from existing government documents and other related research findings on the subject matter.

**Sample and Sampling procedure**
The sample size was 180 consisting of 60 male and 120 female farmers randomly selected from Uasin Gishu County

- Review articles and critical analysis essays
- Research and academic journals
- Original research findings not yet published
- Government documents and public records,
- Textbooks

**Findings**
Factors that constraint gender mainstreaming in agricultural extension

**Major Gender Inequalities that characterized the agricultural sectors:** Kenya’s agricultural sector is characterized by gender inequalities that hurt the performance of the sector. The inequalities are found within institutions, programmes communities and households.

**Institutional gender concerns**
Absence of gender sector policy to guide gender streaming within the entire sector.

Current gender mainstreaming machines and mechanisms are not strong and high enough in the hierarchy to reflect the commitment and the accountability of the sector to gender mainstreaming.

Sector budgets are not like gender sensitive i.e. not reflecting the different needs and circumstances of men and women.

While representation of women has grown steady in the last decades there are still gaps to be addressed.
Agricultural technologies and infrastructure are not always sensitive to the needs of male and female staff, and male and female farmers (MOA 2013). While there have been significant improvements in the work environment, there are still areas that require attention including facilities and technologies. Resources for gender mainstreaming work are considered inadequate. Although a lot of effort has gone into training, gender capacity is inadequate, particularly in geographical areas.

**Programmes based on gender issues**
Baselines are not fully engendered, i.e. not disaggregated sex, particularly on access to and control over control of production, resources, benefits and leadership. Factors of production include land, credit, skill among others. Programmes objectives are not fully engendered, i.e. they do not fully reflect the differential circumstances and needs of men and women. Implementation plans do not fully take into account the different situations of men and women. Programmes outcome are not well engendered, for example yield, income, leadership.

**Community and house-holds based gender concerns.**
Heavy workloads for women compared to men, women operates under serious time constraints, thus limiting their efficiency and the ability to respond to changing economic opportunities. Women operates under serious resource constraints. Important resources including land, extension services, finances, farm implements, among others. All these have been shown to greatly undermine agricultural productivity in Kenya.

Women’s limited control over benefits accruing from their input and contribution to agriculture. The disincentives thus created undermine women’s interest and motivation to invest and work on the land and instead, seek other options that directly benefit them. In the end, agricultural production and productivity decline
Women are under-represented in local institutions that makes significant decision regarding local development.

Often, women have weak leadership skills and lack confidence due to kinds of socialization they have been subjected to. Representation in terms of numbers is therefore not enough and additional support and mentoring in forms of leadership, training and exposure, would be necessary to get them to participate in ways that they can significantly influence the development agenda.

In most African traditional setups, the issue of gender mainstreaming is not embraced at all. It is looked at as a foreign practice that goes against the socio-cultural alignments of the dwellers. In West Pokot and Marakwet counties, the issue of Female Genital Mutilation is a practice that might not end soon even if government, religious, human rights and civil society crusaders try to discourage them.

**Gender roles:**
Gender roles are clusters of socially and culturally defined and learned expectations about how people will behave in specific situations.

In any society, gender roles are developed and transmitted through the process of socialization with the family members and other significant groups and individuals taking up the major roles of agents of socialization at various developmental stages.

Women in Africa, generally play an important role in small scale traditional agricultural production(Afolabi,2008).Rural women have taken over the production and processing of arable crops and are responsible for as much as 80% of the staple food items. Women farmers are the principal labour force on smallholder farms and perform the largest share in land preparation, weeding, transporting, processing and marketing of agricultural products, they make up to
60-80% of the labor force (women in agriculture-WIA- development programme in Nigeria)

Rural women according to Olawoye (1988) constitute the ‘‘the economically active population’’ but they are largely not considered productive because they usually work as unpaid family labour.

These social cultural roles are in most cases interchangeable between men and a woman, for example tending or working in the farms is seen as a female role. Female may purely be responsible for weeding while men’s responsibility may be to engage in heavy machinery such as tractors e.t.c. In most cases, men have exploited their female counterparts in the way they have taken the role of earning from the sacrifices of women with their little access to the same. The female are placed at the periphery in all this.

In Asia and Africa, women do much of the agricultural work, yet in this two societies, the culture dictates that the women do housework.

In certain communities such as the Maasai and Somalis women are not allowed to attend certain important meetings where serious decisions are made or serious issues are discussed pertaining to development. It is the male domain strictly, and if they have to attend, they sit far away from the meeting venue.

**Gender perception**

Gender perception is a term used to describe how individuals are classified as male, female, or transgendered. Gender perception is the way in which a person is viewed as belonging to a gender. It may be used to describe group perceptions about gender as well as individual perceptions about one’s own gender.

There is a gender perception between productive and reproductive side of women’s work and lives. The general view that is widely held is that women have no or little productive abilities and hence their main work is reproductive in nature. Reproduction encompasses the care and maintenance of the household and its
members such as cooking, cleaning, childbearing, mostly regarded as female work. This perception has relegated women to spectator in meaningful agricultural development.

The labour invested in the family maintenance, including child bearing and rearing, house work, care of the ill and the elderly, has been considered to belong to the private domain and outside the purview of development example, agricultural activities aimed at enhancing better outputs.

In most societies, gender power relations favor men and as a result, different values are given to men’s tasks.

**Land tenure**

Land tenure consists of the ways in which to obtain the right to possess and use land. Land tenure may vary from one society to another. Land ownership, access to other productive resources and the organization of agricultural production are influenced by cultural practices and traditions. For example, rules of land inheritance (by lineage, gender and or culturally determined characteristics are core access to land. In some communities, land is owned by a tribe or kinship group and each family has the right to use as much land as it needs to feed itself. In most African settings, and specifically Kenya, land ownership is mainly a preserve of men and not female. Female do not have power to make any decisions on land, hence, affecting agricultural development by women. Men may without notice sale or dispose off any piece of land.

In many patrineal African countries, the cultural customs dictates that if a woman becomes a widow, she has to remarry one of her husband’s brothers. This custom allows the woman to continue having access to land and food security, for otherwise she would have to leave the lineage on death of her husband. This is a common trend in western and Nyanza regions of Kenya.
HIV/AIDS and women in rural commun

The AIDS pandemic is not only a health problem. Among development agencies the pandemic is increasingly regarded as important cross cutting developmental issue that requires a multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary perspective. Cultural beliefs, practices and attitudes are determinants of the sexual behavior that causes the nature and the rate of its transmission.

FAO’s study in the area of AIDS and agriculture has shown that the HIV/AIDS pandemic exacerbates existing obstacles to sustainable agricultural production and increase food insecurity with different impacts on each gender according to its role in the household and community. HIV/AIDS has had a big impact on women in the society, according to the gender system, women who are the traditional care givers, spend a considerable amount of time taking care of the AIDS patients and the supply of agricultural labour for specific tasks is significantly reduced.

In order to reduce the vulnerability of rural populations and the effects of the pandemic on food security, sustainable development and rural development policies and programmes need to take into account social-cultural and economic factors such as land tenure patterns, inheritance practices, access to, as well as use and management of, productive and non-productive resources. Poor health results into low productivity.

Lack of control over productive resources

Rural women lack control over productive resources necessary for their livelihood activities. These include lack of control over land, labor, capital, decision making. All these are major limitations for the majority of rural women. There is the need to improve access of rural women to all these productive resources to enhance their productivity and expand the areas they use for production. Without adequate incentives, infrastructure, credit etc, their productivity will remain low.
Lack of social and economic power
Women are usually ascribed or given a lower status than men and they are not usually allowed a voice in development. Rural women need to be encouraged to take active roles in agricultural activities and women should be encouraged to form cooperatives, farm focus group discussions and traditional groups whereby they would be allowed to contribute and give their contributions to agricultural developments.

Lack of education and training
Education is very essential in the development process. It enhances participation and helps to build confidence in women. In-equality with male counterparts inhibits progress. Women’s access to education and training in basic skills contributes to the vicious cycle of under-development, low productivity and poor conditions of health and welfare of women (Odejide, 1988). Rural women usually rely on their service providers due to the lack of education.

Illiteracy is a major setback to new technology. Passing and receiving of any new innovation can be a major challenge especially to the women because are seen as the major implementers of most technologies at the farm level.

Time
Rural women do not have enough time for other economic activities due to their involvement in multiple tasks and this has limited expansion on their scale of activities. This also limits their ability to participate in other income generating activities (Odejide, 1996). (Jiggeus 1996) identified the constraints of rural women in agriculture as fluctuation in the supply and demand with seasonal climatic changes, frequent product market venture, poor opportunities for diversification and multiple roles of women limiting their freedom to exploit commercial assets. More attention
should be focused on designing programs that will help to enhance the income and improve productivity of rural women.

**Political will**  
According to (GAD), Gender and development theory, it finds its theoretical roots in socialist feminism and has bridged the gap left by the modernization theorists by linking the relations of production and reproduction and taking into account all aspects of women’s lives. Perspective, looking at totaling of social organization, economic and political life in order to understand the aspects of a particular aspect of society.

Where a government does not put emphasis on the participation and promotion of women, they will not have an enabling environment that allows them actively participate in development.

The current political structure of Governance informed from the new constitution promulgated in 2010, provides a bigger space in championing women’s participation in political, social and economic affairs, hence boosting their decision making in critical matters of development.

However, if the recent developments in our legislature is anything to go by following the Marriage Bill 2013, passed in March 2014, then the emancipation and gender mainstreaming and social inclusion is far from over. The bill states that the male spouse is not any obligation to consult or seek approval from the wife as regards to marrying another wife. What is currently referred to as the tyranny of male dominance in social, political and economic matters. The impact of that bill to rural women and as regards to agricultural development is that a woman has no say in matters related to family. The leeway for a male spouse to marry as many wives without or with little consent from wife translates in depleting the little resources e.g land available and hence reduced outputs. Such political imbalance in policy making negates the gains already in women empowerment.
**Gender blind policies**
These kind of policies do not recognize any distinction between sexes. The assumptions they make favor existing gender relations. Hence gender blind policies tend to exclude women. Such exclusion has far reaching implications in agricultural extension. There is therefore need to have gender aware policies. These policies recognize in addition to men, women are also development actors. That woman may have different development needs, interests and priorities, which may sometimes conflict with those of men. These gains have been realized through the new constitutional dispensation.

**Cultural attitude/norms**
The culture of a society is the accepted way of doing things in that particular society. It is the way in which people live, their customs, traditions, methods of cultivation etc. Such cultures may work for or against the development of agriculture. Communities such as those that live along the coast have their women not actively engaged in agricultural issues; therefore this can greatly hamper food production. It is men that go out to do work while women have little or active participation. This is the opposite to communities such as the Luhya and Kalenjin from western and Rift valley respectively.

**Inheritance**
The way in which land and other possessions pass from one generation to the next affects a lot agriculture extension work. In some cultures, a man’s possessions are inherited not by his wife or even his children but by his mother’s brothers. This reduces immensely the woman’s incentive to access or develop the farm. In many areas, it is common practice for a man to divide his land between his sons excluding his wife even before he dies. In other rural societies, land is not inherited at all, when the male farmer dies, the land he farmed is taken back by their kinship groups for reallocation.
Conclusion

The current status of gender empowerment is very promising, first by the fact that there is a new constitutional dispensation. In the new constitution all aspects of gender mainstreaming and social inclusion (GM&SI) have been catered for, worthy to note is the bigger voice women have participating and deciding on key policy issues touching on politics, economy and social life. Thirty percent (30%) representation in all aspects of service has endowed women the opportunity of relevance in the society.

Government has come up with policies directly touching on the disadvantaged in our society and women are key in this consideration. There are deliberate strategies to empower women, youth and the physically challenged; a good example is in the area of finance. Funds such as Women enterprise funds (WEF), Uwezo funds, youth enterprise funds (YEF), county governments have also specific programs targeting women and the youths, are just but a few of such positive initiatives.

The strategy or the approach is women must be groups and more so practicing a table banking model. This in itself has increased the women capacity to participate actively in the economic boost of a country. These women have nowadays have ease access to things such as farm inputs, coming up with businesses etc without necessarily bothering their male counterparts.

Looking at the previous sections of the paper, it is imperative that gender issues need to be addressed so as to have sustainable agricultural development. First, gender dimension is crucial for economic reasons and from the efficiency point of view. This is especially true in the agriculture sector, where gender inequalities in access to and control over resources are persistent, undermining a sustainable and inclusive development of the sector. Second, equity or distributional issues are related to gender differences in outcomes. Gender differences, arising from the socially constructed
relationship between men and women, affect the distribution of resources between them and cause many disparities in development outcomes. Third, gender roles and relations affect food security and household welfare, critical indicators of human development. Last, but not least, gender equality is a basic human right, one that has value in and of itself.

Not taking gender issues into account may result in projects that are technically successful but that negatively affect both women and children and augment social and economic stratification.

Women are crucial in the translation of the products of a vibrant agriculture sector into food and nutritional security for their households. They are often the farmers who cultivate food crops and produce commercial crops alongside the men in their households as a source of income. When women have an income, substantial evidence indicates that the income is more likely to be spent on food and children’s needs.

FAO (2011) estimates that closing the gender gap in agriculture would generate significant gains for the agricultural sector: If women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20–30%. This, in turn, could raise total agricultural output.

When women receive the same levels of education, experience and farm inputs as men, there are no significant difference in male and female farmer’s productivity.

Micro and small enterprises offer a number of particular advantages for rural women: flexible hours, location on or near women’s houses, ease of entry, and links with local markets and this can go a long way in reducing the prevalent poverty among women.

**Recommendation**

The following are some of the recommendations for mainstreaming gender for sustainable agricultural development;
• Setting up gender responsive education and training programs in order to ensure that women have the capacities to effectively use agricultural land and means of production
• Improve the political and institutional frameworks regarding both formal and informal sector in order for men and women to have an equal share and opportunity in agricultural development.
• Giving women an equal say in decision-making processes, participate in agricultural extension activities can improves their access to resources, factors of production such as land and capital, and to markets.
• Systematically integrate gender-sensitive information on agriculture and rural development into national or regional statistics.
• Women need to be able to use and/or own land and other productive resources in order to secure livelihoods and food security of their families. Improving women’s access to financial, technological and extension services, as well as to markets. An example is increasing land registration in the name of women.
• Introduce technologies that are women friendly to can contribute to strengthening women’s independence and control over output, thus reducing the time they spend for routine burdens that are common in rural areas (such as gathering firewood or water), and allowing them to engage in more productive tasks.

In concluding, it is important to note the following:

1) That no approach can be neutral in terms of its effect on the power relationship between men and women.
2) Second, gender inequality is highly linked with the power struggle that hinders the recognition of women as significant actors and negotiators of the development processes.
3) Finally, the need for including actual fieldwork results into theories of development. Basically, the collective needs of individuals need to be put into consideration when implementing various development theories.
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