

THE IWG-GEM

FRAMING THE ISSUES ON LIVELIHOODS,
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY
FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE:
GLOBAL, MACRO, MICRO

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Women and Food

- Women produce the bulk of food consumed and ensure that each family member gets an adequate food ration and satisfactory nutritional level.
- Women work on farms and fruits and vegetable gardens to earn income.

Women and Food

- Sub-Saharan Africa women generate up to 80 percent of essential foodstuffs used both for sale and for household consumption. Fifty three percent of Egyptian agricultural labor is produced by women. In Colombia and Peru 25 to 45 percent of work in the agricultural field is undertaken by women.

Women and Food

- They invest a great deal of their time, energy and income in resource management, purchasing food, preparing food and collecting fuel and ingredients to ensure a balanced meal. Women in Southeast Asia, allocate up to 90 percent of their labor for rice cultivation.

Women protectors and managers of agricultural environment.

- Women have invaluable knowledge of the biodiversity resources
 - Women in sub-Saharan Africa cultivate up to 120 different species of plants in the plots around spaces allocated for cash crops cultivated by men.
 - In the Andean regions of Bolivia, Colombia and Peru, women are responsible for the generation and conservation of seed banks that constitute the backbone of food production.

Feminization of agriculture

- The FAO highlighted the 'feminization of agriculture' and discrimination against women farmers in access to and control over resources. The majority of farmers are women. In Malawi the male rural population fell by 21.8 percent between 1970 and 1990 while female rural population only fell by 5.4 percent.

Gender discrimination

- Despite this feminization of agriculture and women's profound endogenous knowledge of agricultural biodiversity, the nature and their level of access to and control over productive resources and assets is alarmingly discriminatory against women farmers as illustrated in the following FAO figures:

Gender discrimination

- Less than 10 percent of Indian, Nepali and Thai women farmers own land.
- An FAO analysis of farm credit schemes undertaken in five African countries showed that women got less than 10 percent of credits allocated to male smallholders.

Gender discrimination

- Women represent only 15 percent of agricultural extension workers worldwide.
- African rural female heads of households are less educated, younger, have less access to capital, extra farm labor, land, credit training and agricultural extension support than their male counterparts

Unpaid Work

- Rural women in developing countries continue to struggle with triple work responsibilities in food crop production, family agricultural-export activities and household non market work. They are disproportionately affected by food crises because they are most confronted with impoverishment, illiteracy, high health risks, inadequate access to productive resources, lack of financial market access and inability to drive changes that affect their lives.
- The 1984 Bangladesh population census reflects a growing trend in developing countries where women are considered “dependents” or “housewives”. This census reported 90% of the active rural women labor force as “housewives”. “Housewife” was not even registered as an activity in the economic activity definition of the survey despite the fact that a 1983 statistical questionnaire stated that rural housewives were responsible for a myriad of agricultural tasks including food production and processing. Later, the 1992 Bangladesh labor force survey made a good step in the right direction. It included unpaid agricultural work. However it still continued to use the word “housewives”.
- Marilyn Waring, one of the most recognized thinkers on women’s unpaid work reported her experience in an Asian country where 92% of women over 10 years of age were described as “inactive” and only 0.5% of women were counted as active in the agricultural sector. She reported a conversation with a high official in the Government statistical division stating: “They expect me to count women who collect fodder, fuel, and water. That’s just about every woman in [the country].”

Unpaid Work

- Consequently, women's contribution in export and food crop farming and their work in non market activities are poorly counted.
- In many developing countries, constitutions recognize men as heads of households. Women in the statistical definitions are “dependents” or “housewives”.

Deforestations and livelihoods

- Deforestation has accelerated at alarming rates. About 130 000 square kilometers km² are deforested every year. This represents 4 times the size of Belgium.
- Excessive industrial exploitation and unsustainable exploitation of forest and arable land for profit maximization and commoditization of agriculture.

Deforestations and livelihoods

- Women in forest areas depend on gathering of food products that are progressively disappearing because of excessive tropical mining and wood exploitation, planting of rapid growth monoculture plants. This competition and pressure on land jeopardize land title ownership for small holder farmers.

Macroeconomic policies

- Macroeconomic policy choices proposing that market-oriented export led growth is the answer for developing countries promoted agricultural export farming while neglecting the food production sector dominated by women.

Macroeconomic policies

- Developing countries high dependence on food imports has been a process in the making. It made them more vulnerable to the global food crisis on the agricultural sector of least developed countries. Economists have warned for several years that the negative impact of market oriented agricultural policies on food availability and sovereignty would degenerate if a world food crisis ever erupted.

To name a few....

- Dumont, Rene. *l'Afrique noire est mal partie*. 1966, Le Seuil
- Gakkou, Mohamed Lamine. *The Crisis in African Agriculture* Palgrave Macmillian. 1987.
- Amin, Samir. *Maldevelopment: Anatomy of a Global Failure: Zed Books*.1990

Water

- The pressure from the IFIs to privatize water will now find an accelerator in the World Trade Organization General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).
- Access to water is a big challenge for women farmers and small holder farmers (example of Coca cola in India)

BWI's Policies in Senegal: 1979 Economic and Financial Ajustement

- increase investment in the sectors that seem to be productive like export led agriculture;
- raise public savings;
- liberalize trade and to rationalize the Para-public sector and make it more efficient.
- Short lived.

BWI's Policies in Senegal:

- 1980: Enhanced Facility Fund
- decrease public spending and removal of agricultural subsidies
- Government did not implement the measures and consequently the IMF did not disburse the funds. Programme suspended 3 months then Government proposed to the IMF a follow-up schedule to assess its ability to implement the reforms

BWI's Policies in Senegal:

- 1981-82: IMF mid term review of track record to evaluate progress made. If results were satisfactory, then funds would be disbursed.
- increase of the prices of necessary goods including food
- increase of tax rate;

BWI's Policies in Senegal:81-82

- freezing of salaries paid by Government;
- More reduction of Government spending on equipment and subsidies delivery;
- slowing down in the rate of increase of domestic borrowing
- overall reduction of Government debt through more sustained debt payment
- This programme was shortly converted into a simple one year standby.

BWI's Policies in Senegal: 1982-83 Stabilisation

- limit the number of civil servants;
- Raise price of agricultural fertilisers
- Reduce farm input subsidies;
- Decrease the population of Government workers in support of the agricultural sector as well as those workers in the other public enterprises;

1983-84 stabilization

- increase in the price of basic goods
- increase of tax collection on producer's price
- reduction of Government spending with serious cuts in the Government support to the agricultural sector and freeze spending on services;

1983-84 stabilization

- Slow down in the growth of civil servant
- Increase efficiency of the groundnut for export production
- Given the unpopularity of these policies and impact on rural areas, the Gov. suspended the stabilisation reforms in 91 to prepare the 93 presidential election.

Results of Macro policies

- Agricultural production and productivity per rural family declined
- Rural migration especially for women and their children is not a result of overpopulation but a flight of people escaping famine and causing terrible pressure on urbanization

Destructive macro policies in Nigeria

- Nigeria that was self sufficient in food became net importers of food following oil boom. It relied on macroeconomic prescriptions to focus its comparative advantage to gain from oil trade and earn foreign exchange. Food production and women farmers were neglected in the process.

Destructive macro policies in Nigeria

- Alarming imbalance exist between Nigeria's national food demand estimated at 4.64 million metric tons per annum and its current consumption rate estimated at 2.3 million metric tons. This means that large populations in dire need of food are not getting the minimum nutritional intake needed.

Economic Policies and climate change

- industrialization and human activities in eroding biodiversity and fostering climate change.
- Change in precipitation manifested in drought and flooding soil erosion, ocean variability and disruption in the life cycle of many plants and animals are combined factors that have been

Crops for Fuel:

- Dominant development and consumption models have accelerated the impact of environmental insensitive promote export oriented agriculture at the expense of subsistence farming.
- Food prices skyrocketed in 2008 and 2009 and remain well above their 2004 level

setting up target levels of Bio-fuels output.

- US: 28.4 billion liters of bio-fuels be used for transportation by 2010.
- E.U. 5.75 percent of bio-fuels by 2010.
- Brazil 5 percent bio-fuels content in diesel oil by 2013.
- China and India 10% ethanol blend in 5 provinces and 5 percent blend in nine states.
- Thailand: 2007 gasoline contain 10% ethanol.

Crops for Fuel

- Rush on bio-fuels use raised demand for wheat, soy, maize, palm oil and for crop cultivation land.
- The WB reported that global prices of wheat increased 181 percent and overall global food price rose 83 percent over the last 3 years up to Feb08.

Crops for Fuel

- US prices in wheat exports rose from \$375/ton in January 2008 to \$440/ton in March. Food inflation surpassed aggregate inflation globally and even more than doubled it in some countries.
- Increased world hunger and malnutrition in the global South

Looking Forward

- The challenge to agriculture and food sovereignty is the commoditization of agriculture and lack of investment in domestic food production
- Even the Sahel presented as doomed for lack of water has fossil lakes and a group of rivers whose combined flow match the Nile

Looking Forward

- The agricultural revolution attempted in Asia and Latin America even though it has its dramatic implication was not implemented in Africa
- This failure has deep colonial and post colonial roots as well as macroeconomic causes

Looking Forward: Technological agricultural revolution

- The priority task is a gender responsive agricultural revolution with a technological aspect regarding what kind of equipment and inputs (fertilizer, water supply, knowledge) could improve productivity of food producers and small holder farmers

Looking Forward: Economic policies

- Options regarding:
 - prices and incomes structures
 - Domestic, exports and Industrial policies
 - Appropriate patterns of financing and credits
 - Agricultural wages, marketing and gender responsive food producer cooperatives
 - Use of indigenous knowledge
 - Valuing women's unpaid work
 - Increasing food producers' productivity

Looking Forward: Social and political support of revolution

- What kind of rural social administration where women farmers have a voice and decision making power
- Mode of social administration
- Organization of farmers including leadership of women food producers