

Introduction

Who's job: gender and the use of animal draft power

History speaks

Although there have been great changes in Eastern and Southern Africa during the last century certain things seem to remain the same. Documentation and verbal history accounts show us that most of the tasks carried out in a rural household have not changed very much. The division of these tasks between women and men have not changed dramatically either. Now, just as a hundred years ago, women carry out most of the household tasks, while the productive, mostly agricultural, tasks are divided between women and men.

Historically women have always been the weeders, the transporters, the wood collectors, the water carriers, the household caretakers and child minders. In only a very few instances have women's tasks changed over the last century in spite of the fact that new technologies, new crops and a monetary economy has changed agriculture forever in Africa.

Animal draft power was introduced in the Eastern and Southern Africa region during the last 100 years and is still being introduced in many areas. One would suppose that a technology as revolutionising as this for agricultural production would also change the division of labour - and it has. Historical accounts show that women carried out most of the agricultural manual tasks, while men often took little part in this job. When animal draft power was introduced men started to get more involved by taking over the new technology. Men started to use draft power for mono cropping of maize, tobacco or other crops that could be marketed. Women continued to produce crops for the household using their own manual labour, and by involving children in their work.

The role and the contribution of women to the economic welfare of the peasant farm family remains a neglected topic in the analysis of agricultural production. Women are in many ways the invisible agricultural producers. Invisible to "developers",

invisible to extensionists, invisible to those who disseminate agricultural technologies such as animal draft power. Agricultural programmes and development efforts are directed at male farmers, forgetting that 60-70% of farmers in the region are women.

Gender relations

Surprisingly animal draft power has not been, and still is not, used for many of the tasks that women carry out. Water carrying, fire wood collection, weeding, etc, are tasks where the use of animal draft power would alleviate women from a lot of hard work. Although women constitute the majority of farmers in the region, they cultivate a smaller area due to the lack of improved technology such as animal draft power.

To enable us to look at this unequal use and access to animal draft power between men and women, we have to look at the farm household and the factors that influence its internal workings. The often clearly defined roles and tasks between men and women start at the household level. The relationship between men and women's tasks and roles is called gender relations and is a result of the prevailing socio-cultural system in a particular society. Gender roles and relations are socially defined and have very little to do with our biological sex. Gender relations are not static and can be changed. Economic changes in a society usually bring changes in gender relations. We have seen an example of this with the introduction of animal draft power when men become increasingly involved in agriculture. Hence, as an increasing number of rural households are female headed this division of labour and the access to animal draft power is bound to change. This handbook will show strategies to analyse gender relations, specifically in an animal traction project.

The cultural pattern of a society can also be the determining factor as to when and how a technology is used. Animal traction is therefore used by different

genders, for different purposes and at different times. Consequently, the pattern of the access to and use of animal draft power differs from community to community. The general pattern remains the same however - men own and use draft animals, women do not.

Increased production

The tremendous population increase in East and Southern Africa over the past decades has led to an intensification as well as an extensification of agricultural production. Unfortunately, there is nothing to suggest that agricultural production has increased in sub-Saharan Africa. Animal traction, however, is often associated with increased production. This is due to better timeliness in activities and the possibility of cultivating a larger area.

Even though women constitute the majority of farmers, they cultivate less land and produce less. Women can not achieve timeliness or cultivate a large area using only their own manual labour. Due to the lack of access to implements, draft animals, training and the knowledge of how to use draft animals, women can not make use of this improved technology for increased production.

Socio-cultural environment

The regional pattern is that women do not use draft animals but there are areas where this is common. In areas in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania and South Africa women can be found to use draft animals, for plowing, weeding and transport of water or firewood. In many communities in East and Southern Africa there are strong socio-cultural objections to women using draft animals. Cattle are by tradition owned by men and used for the acquisition of wives, lobola or bridewealth. To maintain or to exchange cattle sometimes has a social value beyond economic reasons.

Even when there are direct economic benefits for women to use draft animals many men in the region seem to be reluctant to let them do so. The common social notion in East and Southern Africa is that cattle are male property and should be used by men.

It is important to note that the absence of women users of animal draft power has nothing to do with capacity or capability to handle draft animals. It is in fact a cultural notion that it is somehow not "proper" for women to handle draft animals.

Access to resources

The use of and the access to the benefits of animal draft power involves indirect or direct access to many other resources such as land, cash, credit, implements and training. Generally, by traditional law land is allocated to and owned by men although many countries in the region give women the right to own land by law. Women till the land belonging to their fathers or husbands. Often the man controls the produce from the land, especially the part of the crop which is marketed.

In a few communities women can own and inherit cattle, but in most cases women have to acquire cattle or donkeys on the open market. This is difficult for female headed households with little cash income. In order to get credits to finance the purchase of implements, draft animals and other inputs, collateral, for example land, is needed. Women rarely have any collateral in their name, and loans are therefore difficult to get from credit institutions. An alternative to this problem is of course to hire draft animals and implements, and possibly labour too. Again, this requires cash resources.

In the prevailing socio-economic situation in the region, where the resources of rural households are limited and hard to get, draft animals may appear to be a risky investment. It is therefore proper to ask whether women can take that risk and have control of draft animals through ownership, instead of access to draft animals through for example hiring.

Extension and agricultural engineering research has focused on male farmers and cash crop production. Women have rarely benefited from the governments extension services since the extension messages are directed towards men and most extensionists are men.

While much research into animal draft power technologies have been conducted little consideration has been given to the aspects of both men and women as users of the implements. There is a need to encourage social scientists and agricultural engineers to collaborate to identify possibilities, constraints and methodologies for women's use of draft technology.

Gender planning in animal traction projects

Animal draft power has the potential to reduce men's

and women's drudgery in agricultural production and household tasks. The use of animal traction can lead to increased agricultural production and increased human productivity. Full benefits from the technology can only be achieved from the technology if both women and men have access and control to the use of animal draft power.

Information, transfer of technology, extension services and credit institutions should be available to both men and women. To fully involve women in the use of animal draft power, the support and cooperation of men is necessary.

Methodologies for the involvement of both men and women in animal traction related projects is necessary and should be based on gender planning methodologies. The present handbook gives suggestions towards gender strategies for animal traction projects to enable women and men to gain equal access to and control of animal draft technology.

The first part of this publication is a guideline or handbook in gender planning for animal traction projects. Strategies and concrete suggestions for actions are given in relation to gender planning and animal traction.

Secondly, the proceedings of the Gender Issues in Animal Traction Workshop are presented, including the fruitful discussions and the final recommendations. The third, and last part of the handbook comprise the papers and articles presented to the workshop. These case studies can give useful insights to planning and implementation of animal traction projects, where gender issues is an important component.

It is hoped that the guidelines and experiences presented here can provide development planners, project staff and others with the tools to design and carry out animal traction related development activities in such a way that they can be more sustainable and equitable to farmers in Eastern and Southern Africa and elsewhere.



Women weeding, Thcad

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