



# Gender Mainstreaming in the Ethiopian Agriculture Sector: A review

Truayinet Mekuriaw

*Ethiopian Institutes of Agricultural Research, Debre Zeit Agricultural Research Center, Extension and communication Research Program, P.O.Box 32, Debre Zeit, Ethiopia*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In Ethiopia, both women and men farmers engage in agricultural and livestock production. However, gender inequality in access to agricultural extension services and control over resources negatively influence production and productivity. Constraining gender relations at household and community level affect women's access to and control over resources and extension services, which in turn affect their productivity. In Ethiopia, the gender productivity gap is 23% attributed partly to limited access to extension services tailored to women's needs [1]. Advancing gender equality is essential to reducing poverty and increasing production and productivity. A report by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) shows that reducing gender inequalities in access to productive resources and services could produce an increase in yields on women's farms of between 20% and 30% [2]. This shows that, if women were given equal access to productive resources that currently men own and advisory services that target men only, their yield will increase by 3–4%. This provides a compelling reason why addressing gender capacity limitations in agricultural extension matters in Ethiopia.

Since women make significant contributions to agriculture production, it is important that Agricultural planning and delivery is gender responsive and account for the differential information needs and constraints of women and men farmers. The gender responsiveness of extension services can improve women's knowledge to make informed decisions and increase their ability to apply appropriate crop and animal husbandry practices. The objective of this paper is to review on the Historical Evolution of Gender mainstreaming in Ethiopian Agricultural.

### **Gender concepts and definitions**

**Gender** is a set of culturally specific characteristics defining the social behavior of women and men and the relationship between them. Gender roles, status and relations vary according to place, groups, generations and stages of the lifecycle of individuals. Gender is not about women, but about the relationship between women and men.

**Gender equality** means that the different behaviors, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favored equally. It does not mean that women and men are the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities are the same.

**Gender equity** means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. In the development context, a gender equity goal often requires built-in measures to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of women.

**Gender mainstreaming** is a strategy for making women's, as well as men's, concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs.

**Gender-responsive budgeting** seeks to incorporate a gender equality perspective into the budgetary process to ensure an efficient allocation of resources based on identified needs and to restructure revenues and expenditures to strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment.

**Gender-neutral approaches** do not account for the differences between women and men and do not consider how women and men may be marginalized and harmed, or may not benefit from research, programs and policy.

**Gender-aware (or responsive) approaches** are designed to meet both women's and men's needs. These approaches ensure that both women and men will benefit, and neither will be harmed by research, programs and policies; for example, by interventions that would exacerbate their work burdens.

**Gender-specific indicators** make it possible to measure inequalities between women and men, for example as regards poverty, violence, education, HIV/AIDS and political representation.

**Gender relations** is a term that emphasizes the relationship between men and women as demonstrated by their respective roles in power sharing, decision making, the division of labor and returns to labor, both within the household and in society at large.

**Gender analysis** is a tool/set of tools to assist in strengthening development planning, implementation, and M&E, and to make programs and projects more efficient and relevant. Gender analysis helps us to frame questions about women's and men's roles and relations in order to avoid making assumptions about who does what, when and why.

Source: Annex 4 of the Gender Equality Strategy for Ethiopia's Agriculture Sector

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

The paper used document analysis as its main method of data collection and analysis. Relevant facts on the historical evolution of gender mainstreaming in Ethiopian agriculture. It was undertaken using some review of related literature from different sources. Published articles and books were also explored to organize the document related to Ethiopian agriculture.

## **III. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **What is gender mainstreaming?**

Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's needs, priorities, concerns and experiences an integral part of the planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation processes [3].

### **Why is gender mainstreaming important?**

Since 1995 gender mainstreaming is a global strategy to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, with the Government of Ethiopia reporting internationally on progress. The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs developed national gender mainstreaming guidelines in 2010 [2] and in 2011 the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources developed their own sector specific gender mainstreaming guidelines [5]. Moreover, Goal 5 of the internationally agreed Sustainable Development Goals aims to: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Building on the success of the first national Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP I), GTP II includes the following strategic pillar: 'Promote women and youth empowerment, ensure their effective participation in the development and democratization process and enable them to equitably benefit from the outcomes of development.' Women's empowerment is also a cross cutting issue in GTP II, highlighting its importance to the Government of Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is committed to and has taken several actions to ensure gender equality by reviewing policy and legal frameworks which were unfair for gender equality and incorporating gender issues in agricultural, rural development and poverty reduction programs. However, it is one of the lowest performing countries against the gender equality indicators among Sub-Saharan African countries. Women and girls in Ethiopia are disproportionately disadvantaged as compared to men and boys in several areas, including literacy, health, livelihoods, food security and nutrition. They also suffer from low status in society and lack of formal social support programs. Manifestations of discrimination against women are numerous and acute. These include limited access to productive resources resulting from cultural norms and practices that have a negative impact on their engagement in the agricultural production as well as their level of productivity. FHHs have, in fact, significantly less value of production (mean = 9,898 Birr/ha) than MHHs (mean = 11,273 Birr/ha). There is a large gender gap in owning decisive productive assets such as agricultural land holdings, which indicates that a lower proportion of FHHs (19.5 percent) has land titles as compared to 80.5 percent MHHs; only about 42 percent females owned one or more ox (en) as compared to 74 percent of their male counterparts. The percentage share of female holders who received extension advisory services was about 51 percent as compared to 62 percent for male holders who received the same services. The same pattern of lower rates in extension package utilization was observed with 19 percent for female holders as compared to 28 percent males who used the package. The proportion of female holders who applied chemical fertilizers was about 50 percent as compared to 58 percent for their male counterparts. At the national level, 15 percent of female landholders and 21 percent of male landholders reported taking out loans. Similarly, 11.3 percent and 9.4 percent of FHHs

participated in vegetable and fruits irrigation production, respectively as compared to 88.7 percent and 90.6 percent of MHHs who participated in the same [6].

According to FAO [6] the table below describes some key agriculture and rural development sector policies and programs with reference to gender equality and the empowerment of rural women.

**Table 1:** Gender analysis of agriculture and rural-development related policies and programs.

Policies	Descriptions
Rural Development Policy and Strategies (RDPS) (2003)	The policy recognized the need for mobilizing about 50 percent of the community, women and men for realization of agricultural and rural development as well as poverty reduction. Further, it emphasized on the need for enhancing women capacity through creating access for primary education and health care as well as tackling HTPs that hinder full utilization of their productive potentials.
Agricultural PIF (2011-2020)	It recognizes the disadvantaged position of rural women in terms of access to resources, level of education, membership of cooperatives, and participation in HH and community decision-making processes and emphasizes the need for strengthening gender mainstreaming in order to increase the benefit obtained from rural labor (men and women) and enhance value addition in the agricultural sector, as well as address gender imbalances at all levels of the institutional frameworks.
Food Security Strategy (1996)	The strategy identified pregnant and lactating mothers and children under five as the highest priority with both the highest risks and the area suffering the most serious consequences of malnutrition that needs to be addressed. It further, recognized the multifaceted positive effect of providing agricultural inputs to resource-poor farmers and loans to destitute women to develop sustainable livelihoods as well as the importance of provision of cash transfers to orphans, the aged and handicapped.
Food Security Programme (2010-2014)	The program makes reference of the needs and interests of both WMHHs and FHHs in all interventions and the in planning and implementation of awareness creation and capacity building activities and need to take into account their specific needs and capacities. This could include attention to low levels of asset holdings (in particular, land), household labor availability and availability of draught power, women's needs in terms of business skills and financial literacy training.
National Nutrition Programme (2013-2015)	The program sets specific targets on the prevalence of child stunting and wasting and aims to reduce the prevalence of chronic under nutrition in women of reproductive age from 27 percent to 19 percent in 2015
Environmental Policy of Ethiopia (1997)	The policy recognizes the need for empowering women to enable their full participation in population and environmental decision-making, resource ownership and management; and facilitate the participation of women across all sections of society in training, public awareness campaigns, formal and informal education and decision making in environment and resource management.
Water Sector Policy (2001) and Water Sector Development Program (2002-2016)	Advocates involvement of water resource users, particularly women in planning, design, and implementation and follow up in their localities of water policies, programs and projects so as to carry them out without affecting the ecological balance.
National Policy and Strategy on DRM (2013)	The policy recognized that women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities as well as people living with HIV/AIDS are the most vulnerable to the impact of hazards and related disaster; DRM activities should be implemented by taking into consideration this objective reality.
National Social Protection Policy of Ethiopia (2012)	It undertakes equitable distribution of the benefits of growth among the different groups, i.e. the females and males of the society as well as their needs as may be required for affirmative action to further empower women; encourages gender-focused mainstreamed interventions.
GTP II (2016-2020)	GTPII puts women and youth economic and social empowerment as one of its seven pillars. It further recognizes the contributions of these key social groups' participation and effective utilization of untapped potential for socio-economic and political participation as well as development of the society.

Source: National Strategy for Ethiopia's Agricultural Extension System

### Gender mainstreaming in the Ministry of Agriculture

The MoA acknowledges and holds itself accountable to a number of national laws, policies, strategies and programs that seek to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. In response to the Constitution and women's policy, the MOANR has designed gender inclusive agricultural policies and established the WAD to facilitate the gender mainstreaming process and women and youth empowerment in the agriculture sector. The directorate has in turn developed guidelines for facilitating the gender mainstreaming process in the sector. These guidelines are supposed to serve as a tool for practitioners to incorporate and prioritize gender issues in the general interventions in the agricultural sector. All departments under MoA are expected to take their own actions accordingly to pursue gender mainstreaming initiatives in their own programs [7]. The gender performance of MoA in terms of program design and implementation shows that it is exerting considerable effort to ensure the participation of women in various activities. The policies, programs and projects designed by MoA contain sex-disaggregated targets and women-specific activities. The specific strategies and programs like the Agriculture Growth Program (AGP), the Food Security Program, the GTP, National Nutrition Program (NNP), National Policy and Strategy on Disaster Risk Management, Participatory Small-scale Irrigation Project (PSSIP), Sustainable Land Management Project (SLMP), Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) and Household Asset Building Program (HABP) have gender components and/ or give consideration to gender. Some of these are also flagship programs and include adopting gender mainstreaming approaches that are supported by guidelines, training and in some cases the recruitment of gender officers at the federal and regional

levels.<sup>4</sup> The inclusion of gender in the curriculum of the agricultural TVET colleges since 2010 and the improved conceptual understanding of staff through various trainings on gender equality and gender mainstreaming are notable [8]. However, lack of a needs assessment or gender analysis as a basis of planning and program designing due to limited technical capacity and lack of political will of leadership on gender mainstreaming is identified as a major gap. Further, the audit report revealed that plan documents of the Ministry have no gender sensitive indicators, other than sex-disaggregated targets for some activities, and there is an observed overall reluctance to properly mainstream gender. Important limitations to mainstream gender include: limited understanding of what gender mainstreaming actually entails, inadequate conceptual clarity regarding gender in general and the focus on mere participation of women; and the widely held perception that equal participation or opportunities of women and men will automatically ensure that they obtain equal outcomes and benefits regardless of the structural power relations that may work against gender equality [7].

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The review concludes that:

- The audit report revealed that plan documents of the Ministry have no gender sensitive indicators, other than sex-disaggregated targets for some activities. Important limitations to mainstream gender include: limited understanding of what gender mainstreaming actually entails, inadequate conceptual clarity regarding gender in general and the focus on mere participation of women; and the widely held perception that equal participation or opportunities of women and men will automatically ensure that they obtain equal outcomes and benefits regardless of the structural power relations that may work against gender equality
- The capacity to translate gender equality policy instruments into actionable strategies and to implement these in Ethiopia is limited at all levels. Gender mainstreaming guidelines and tools are not sufficiently translated into accessible and useable formats or popular versions.
- Current Agricultural extension approaches and methods are inadequate to address specific needs of women farmers. It because of lack of a needs assessment or gender analysis as a basis of planning and program designing due to limited technical capacity and lack of political will of leadership on gender mainstreaming is identified as a major gap.

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