

GRAFTED UNDERSTANDINGS OF EMPOWERMENT IN AGRICULTURE: A QUALITATIVE GENDERED COMPARISON OF ETHIOPIAN SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

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RESEARCH QUESTION:

In what ways do men's and women's definition/perception of empowerment in agriculture converge and diverge?

JUSTIFICATION AND PURPOSE



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- ✓ Ongoing focus on gender as a cross-cutting theme within development
- ✓ Rise in interest in quantitative indicators such as the WEAI
- ✓ There is a call to understand empowerment within specific cultural contexts

What we know about women's empowerment (and women's empowerment in agriculture)

❖ Scholarly definitions

“agency”
“self efficacy”
“autonomy”
“self-direction”
“self-determination”
“liberation”
“participation”
“mobilization”
“self-confidence”

“Altering relations of power which constrain women's options and autonomy and adversely affect health and well being.” (Sen, 1993)

“Empowerment is [an] expansion [process] of people's ability [and desire], to make strategic life choices [that affect both the individual and his/her surrounding community], particularly in contexts where this ability has been denied to them.”
(Kabeer, 1999)

“Empowerment is defined as a group's or individual's capacity to make effective choices, that is, to make choices and then to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes”.
(Alsop 2006)

What we know about women's empowerment (and women's empowerment in agriculture)

- ✓ Four recurrent key themes across empowerment literature (Boehm and Staples 2004)
 1. Empowerment is both a process and outcome.
 2. Empowerment can encompass both the personal and the collective.
 3. Empowerment is based on the premise that those in positions of relative powerlessness, once exposed to resources, can utilize those resources for change.
 4. Empowerment can be facilitated by others but not created for others: individuals and groups must claim power for themselves.

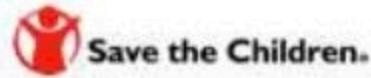
METHODS



ENGINE



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



- ❖ Five-year, USAID funded, integrated nutrition program
- ❖ ENGINE's primary goal : “Help Ethiopian women and children less than 5 years old achieve sustainable improvements in their nutritional status, which will enable them to lead healthier and more productive lives.”
- ❖ Geographic focus on woredas serviced by the Ethiopian Agricultural Growth Program (AGP)

Study Design

- ❖ Cross sectional qualitative study design
- ❖ Associated with a larger quantitative study (multi-stage cluster probability proportional to size sampling: 10 woredas within 2 regions)
 - ✓ Purposively chose 2 of the woredas, based on feasibility and logistics



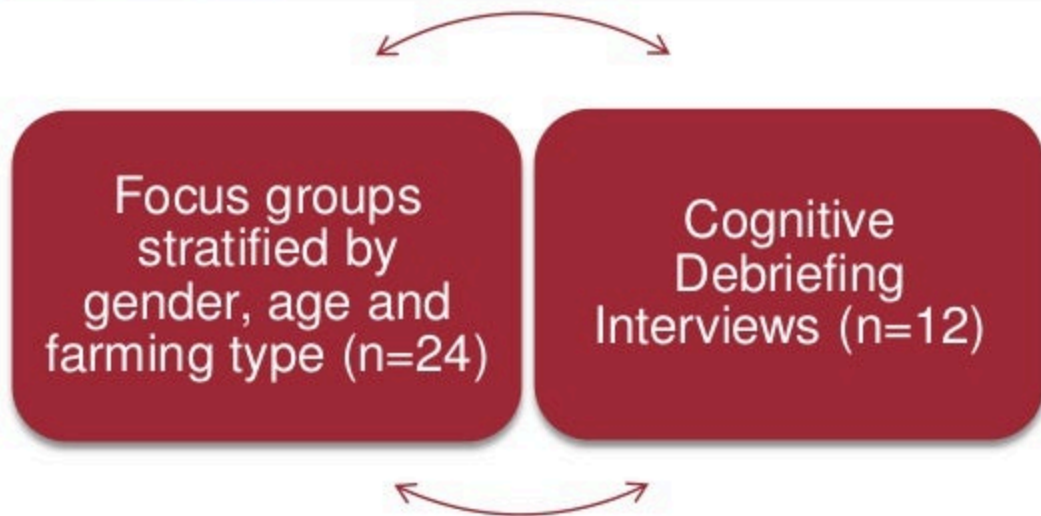
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❖ Methods



Farming types that were identified as

- Primarily cash crop based
- Primarily home garden based
- Primarily livestock based

RESULTS



Preliminary Results

WOMEN

When I say the word 'woman' what word or words do you think of?

- ✓ Identity is connected to childbirth, caregiving, fieldwork
- ✓ Responses consistently in the third person narrative
- ✓ Understanding of their gender is based on both external perceptions and personal reflections.

"A woman is all things".

(FG 4, All women, Wondo Genet)

"A woman is considered weak. A woman can't freely speak in public. This is not my personal opinion. It is others' or outsiders' opinion. On my behalf, I believe a woman can do everything.

(FG 13, All women, Semen Achefer)

Preliminary Results

“We are superior to female naturally and decider on the property. I assist my wife. In Genesis the first created man is Adam as a result male is superior to female. We are the ones who [are] involved in agricultural activity as well as perform those activities female are unable to work”.

(FG 12, All men, Wondo Genet)

MEN

When I say the word ‘man’ what word or words do you think of?

- ✓ Identity is connected to providing for the family, making income related decisions, work capacity, leadership roles
- ✓ Responses consistently in the first person or collective ‘we’ narrative

Preliminary Results

WOMEN

- ✓ Empowerment circulates around decision-making, cash handling, skill, education, external acknowledgement
- Many defined empowerment by the processes a woman engages in

MEN

- Many defined empowerment by the outcomes a man possesses

Preliminary Results

WOMEN

- ✓ Empowerment circulates around decision-making, cash handling, skill, education, external acknowledgement

“An empowered woman is someone who works at home, fulfills what is missing at home, she has to do all things at home, manage the money and discuss the decision-making.”

FG 2, All Women, Wondo Genet

MEN

“To me, an empowered man is someone who has a good farm, adequate money, brave, and with adequate wealth.”

FG 11, All men, Wondo Genet

Other emerging themes

- Informal power structure within children to help leverage women's decision-making power
- Legal systems and programs promoting gender equality lead to forced alternative mechanisms to retain power (by men)
- Implications of the acquirement of empowerment language

"It is alright, there is no problem, and we are equal to male. We have been informed."

(FG 14, All women, Semen Achefer)

Researcher reflexivity



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Questions ?

