

Unravelling the Misfit: How Gender Equity Interventions in Nepal's Agrobiodiversity Management Fails to Respond to Rapidly Changing Rural Livelihood Context

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Outline

- **Brief overview of socio-economic context**
- **Agrobiodiversity and rural livelihoods**
- **Three main assumptions- gender equity and agrobiodiversity management**
 - Access to knowledge
 - Quota and reservation policy
 - Community approach
- **Conclusions**

Socio-economic contexts in Nepal

Increased feminization of agrobiodiversity practices

- > 60% of the farm force = women (subsistence)
- Women headed households (27 % in 2011 i.e. 10% more before 10 yrs.)
- Remittance - 1/3 of the GDP
- Livelihoods - agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry

Policies in place

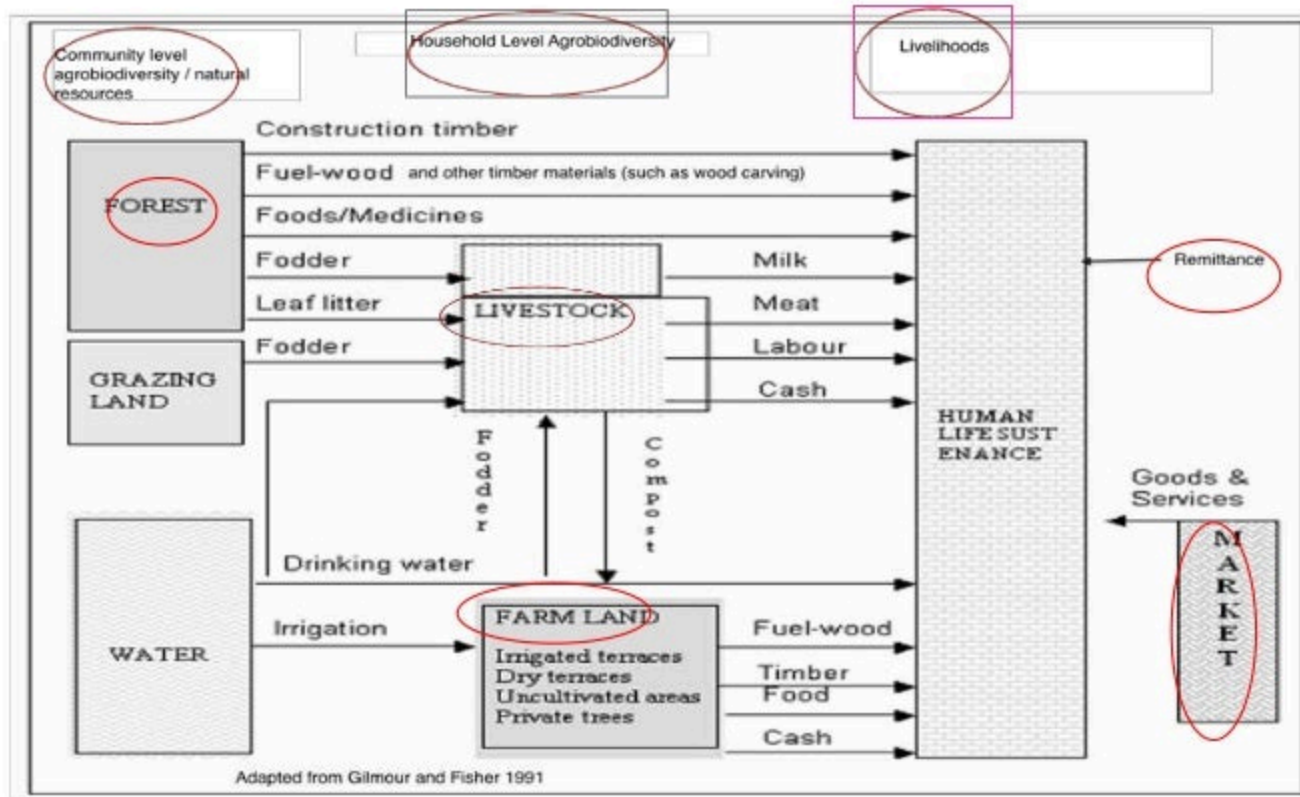
- 33% women in national and 41% in local government
- 50% women in agriculture and forestry local level groups
- 20% women have ownership over land

State restructuring is in progress- (now Federal republic)



Agrobiodiversity and rural livelihoods

Livelihoods systems of small holders in the Nepal hills



Source: Adapted from Gilmour and Fisher (1991)

Three main assumptions- gender equality and agrobiodiversity management

A) Gender equitable access to knowledge

B) Gender balanced local institutions - policies

C) Community approach

A.1 Gender equitable access to knowledge

- ✓ High yielding drought tolerant rice seeds are available to everyone
- ✓ Cropping technology is available to everyone
- ✓ Low yield of rice straw (livestock feed)
- ✓ Women's hardships is escalated in managing livestock feed
- ✓ Implication on family nutrition (dairy) and agricultural productivity (manure)



A.2 Community forests management

- **Primary focus on timber production**
- **All the users are trained in forest management (knowledge)**
- **Shift in focus (Forest for carbon!)**
- **Result- no or limited understory crops:**
 - **reduced flow of fodder, litter and firewood**



- Introduced by British India Company -colonial time
- Forest is considered as a place to produce timber
- Shift to community management but limited changes in forest management
- Same knowledge is reproduced through community groups

A.3 Livestock number reduced

a) Declined in crop residue

b) Reduced supply of fodder in the forests

c) Emergence of New weeds in agricultural & forest land

{fodder collection time increased by 25%}

d) Shortage of household labour

- Migration
- Girls education



A.4. Agri-forest-farm-livestock linkage



-ve



Women's workload (-ve)
**Biodiversity- ecological
resilience (-ve)**

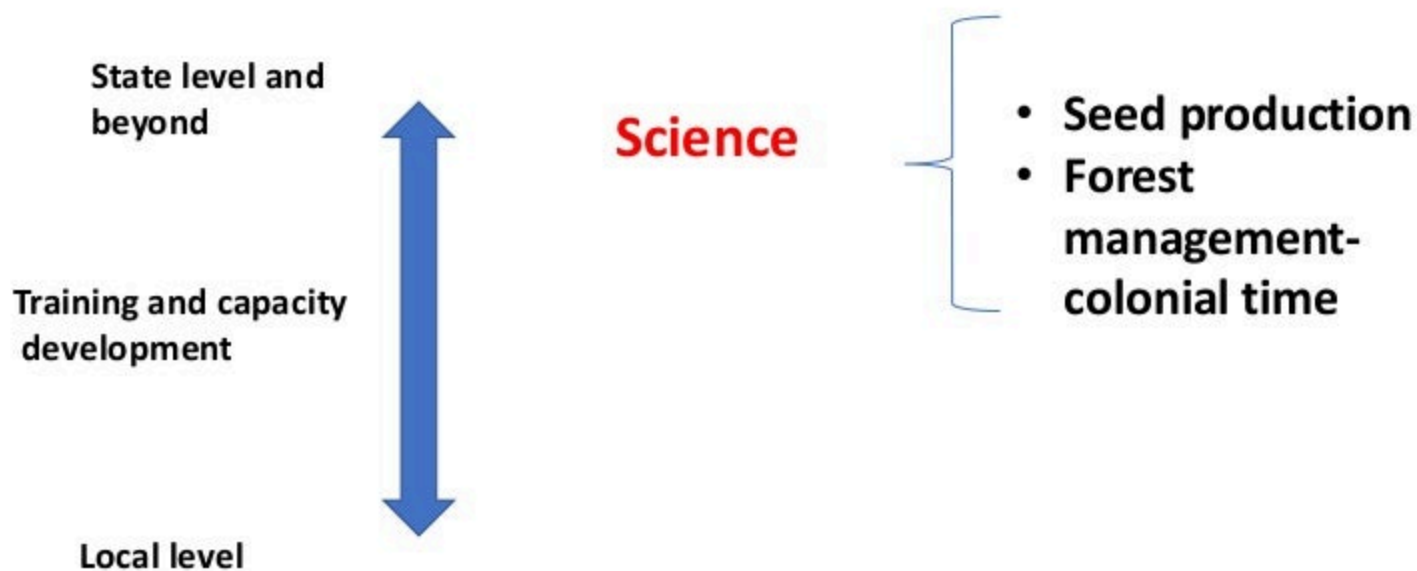
Health and nutrition (-)
Agriculture production- manure (-)
Income (-)

B1 Too much focus on women's number

- Participatory exclusion
- Capacity building
- Lack critical thinking and questioning
- Structural inequality ??
- Underlying root causes



C1. Community focused approach



Mismatch of scale: local needs vs scientific innovation/national priorities

Conclusions

Good access to knowledge may always helpful if gender is not considered in knowledge production process

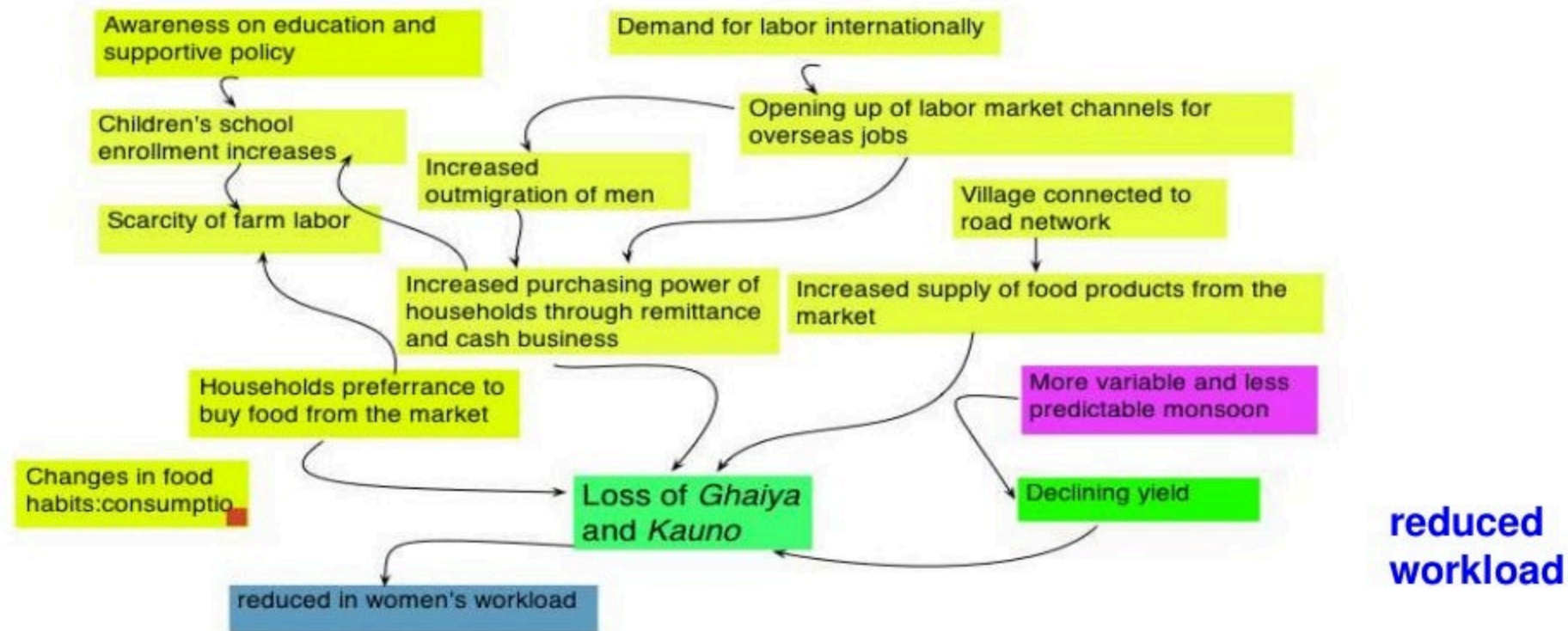
Too much focus on the number (women) overshadowed structural inequality and emerging issues

Systems approach to deal with the multiple levels and across the scale at a time instead of local community focus

Critical Action Research !!!

**THANK YOU
COMMENTS WELCOME !!!!**

Rich biodiversity as a good attribute to resilience



Color legend:

Socio-economic changes

Gender related changes

Agricultural biodiversity related change

Climatic change

reduced workload