



Gender, Agriculture & Assets Project

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Women's Empowerment in Agriculture: Lessons from Qualitative Research

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Purpose of qualitative methods

- ▶ **Contextualising quantitative pro-WEAI and other findings**
 - ▶ Presentation of the overall context, not just the person
 - ▶ e.g., seasonality diagrams to identify how the timing of survey fits with agricultural cycle, time use
 - ▶ e.g., broader description of the project itself and how it relates to other development efforts
- ▶ **Explaining project impacts from participants' perspectives**
- ▶ **Validation of pro-WEAI**
 - ▶ Emic meanings of “empowerment”
 - ▶ Individual domains and indicators

Methods

- ▶ Review of project documents
- ▶ Community profile
- ▶ Seasonality patterns
- ▶ Sex-disaggregated focus groups on local understanding of empowerment
- ▶ Semi-structured interviews: Life histories
- ▶ Key informant interviews: Market traders
- ▶ Key informant interviews: Project staff



How communities understand empowerment

- ▶ Taking care of oneself
- ▶ Taking care of family needs
- ▶ Taking care of others

- ▶ Active, hard work
- ▶ Good decisions
- ▶ Following social norms

Agency

- ▶ Economic means
- ▶ Connections
- ▶ Confidence
- ▶ Help with labor

- ▶ Financial status
- ▶ Well dressed
- ▶ Good appearance
- ▶ Admired

Resources

Achievements

Types of Agency

- ▶ Intrinsic (Power within; 4 indicators)
 - ▶ Strong, courageous, moral being
- ▶ Instrumental (Power to; 6 indicators)
 - ▶ Hard work, good decisions
 - ▶ Property rights as social relationships, require exercise of agency
- ▶ Collective (Power with; 2 indicators)
 - ▶ Lifting burden, helping others
 - ▶ Husbands, children, parents, other community members
- ▶ Coercive power (Power over) always negative
 - ▶ Men or other women (daughters in law)

Instrumental agency: Ownership and control over resources

- ▶ “Ownership” is self-reported, context specific
 - ▶ Mali: “no village belongs to a woman” - men are owners and women are constantly considered outsiders
 - ▶ Tanzania Maasai 96 % of men, 65% of women report they own some of the land cultivated by the household, either solely or jointly
- ▶ Claiming rights over assets is a type of agency
 - Nepal rights over *pewa*, dowry, or family property
 - Ethiopia: ‘I cannot say that it is mine. I have to say that it is ours,’ but women exercise more bargaining power over resources; men cannot freely access or control them without women’s consent.



Instrumental agency: Control over income

- ▶ Women control personal income, not household income (Ethiopia; Tanzania)
- ▶ Influences household dynamics
 - ▶ Masculine control (Mali; Ghana)
 - ▶ Contradictory

Women “should not go for income earning. Men should earn money, thus should take all decisions in household and outside” (Rubin et al. 2018:34).

“As women ... earn money and the man lives by his wife’s income, so in this case a husband needs to tolerate his wife’s voice” (Rubin et al. 2018:34)

- ▶ Personal motivation vs. social sanctions (Burkina Faso; Ghana; Nepal; Tanzania)



Instrumental agency: Time and Mobility

Time

- ▶ Control over time, not less work, is empowering
- ▶ Household gender roles affect time allocation

“If you find a man washing dishes, women will talk around that the woman is controlling the man”

“I have a good relationship with my husband; he fetches water, collects firewood using a donkey, and cooks food when I’m busy. I think this is a result of increased understanding about the situation of women, which came through various training”



Mobility

Consent: “Some wives can travel far without any escort but with my consent but mostly this is for a hardworking woman. Those who are behaving badly they are not allowed to travel. For those who travel by foot [or are bringing livestock], they will be accompanied because they must have security.”

Intrinsic agency: Intrahousehold relationships

► Spouses

► Submission (Burkina Faso; Ethiopia)

“The cultural marriage practice that demands the total submission of women to their husbands is changing because of the increased awareness of women as a result of various trainings provided by the government and NGOs” (Ethiopia; Mulema 2018:21).

► Supportive (Kenya)

► Interdependence > independence (Ethiopia; Nepal)

► Other household members:

► Co-wives: Attend meetings, diversify production (Tanzania; Mali)

► Mother-in-Law: strained relations bad for young women and elderly mother-in-laws (Nepal)



Intrinsic agency: Intimate partner violence perpetrated against women

- ▶ Used to exercise control
 - “Corporal punishment is very good because she will do what I tell her to do” (Tanzania; Krause et al. 2018:36)
- ▶ Agency constrained by fear (Tanzania; Mali)
 - “You will be afraid of doing anything on your own just because it can result to beating. All the time you are thinking of the damages and pain of your body due to those sticks. You can lose parts of your body or get a disability (Tanzania; Krause et al. 2018:36).”
- ▶ Social network may protect women (Nepal)



Collective agency: Leadership and group participation

- ▶ “Leadership” informal; signified by helping others
 - ▶ “act humbly, participate in community fundraisers and regularly report back to group members or the community” (Tanzania; Krause et al. 2018:28).
- ▶ Self-esteem

“I am a female leader in my community. All the members of the village respect me. I am always informed of the visits in the village and I participate in external meetings, on behalf of my village. I am influential in my village” (Mali; Bagayoko 2018:36).”
- ▶ Constraints
 - ▶ Spousal approval (Tanzania; Mali; Ethiopia)
 - ▶ Logistics (Bangladesh)



Interconnections among indicators

- ▶ Time as a tether: workload limits mobility, income generating ability
- ▶ Lack of transport (asset) limits mobility, income generation
- ▶ Intrahousehold relations → trust → mobility → income generation
- ▶ Group membership requires mobility, time, support of husbands, family
- ▶ Income generation supports greater decision-making (and vice versa)
- ▶ Nepal: whether women hide income, assets depends on autonomy, intrahousehold relations
- ▶ “Male dominance over information was pointed out when answers were provided about things such as cell phone ownership, the person to whom extension workers talk, the consent of whom to look for before traveling, the ownership and access to means of transportation, and topics covered by extension workers when they visit villages. **This access and control over information is facilitated by men’s status as owners of resources.**” (Mali)

Implications for pro-WEAI:

Emic views expand ideas of empowerment

- ▶ Each component of empowerment is relational, not simply individual

- Decision-making
- Asset ownership
- Labor allocation
- Increasing income

- Time management
- Group membership
- Mobility

- ▶ Benefit of empowerment is also relational

- ▶ “Lifting the burden” “Taking care of others”
- ▶ Using social capital to address IPV

- ▶ Recognizing that the interconnections between dimensions of empowerment

Resources

- ▶ GAAP2 Qualitative Research Protocols posted on WEAI Resource Center: <http://weai.ifpri.info/>
- ▶ Qualitative reports from each project will be posted on <http://gaap.ifpri.info/>

Discussion Papers

- ▶ Meinzen-Dick, Ruth Suseela; Rubin, Deborah; Elias, Marlène; Mulema, Annet Abenakyo; and Myers, Emily. 2019. Women's empowerment in agriculture: Lessons from qualitative research. IFPRI Discussion Paper 1797. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). <http://ebrary.ifpri.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15738coll2/id/133060>
- ▶ Malapit, Hazel J.; Quisumbing, Agnes R.; Meinzen-Dick, Ruth Suseela; Seymour, Gregory; Martinez, Elena M.; Heckert, Jessica; Rubin, Deborah; Vaz, Ana; and Yount, Kathryn M. 2019. Development of the project-level Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (pro-WEAI). IFPRI Discussion Paper 1796. Washington, DC: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). <http://ebrary.ifpri.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15738coll2/id/133061>

Draft Qualitative Reports

- ▶ Nepā School of Social Sciences and Humanities. 2017a. Empowerment. [Nepal Heifer]
- ▶ Nepā School of Social Sciences and Humanities. 2017b. Evaluation of the Impacts of Heifer's Livestock Transfer Project: Assets, Social Capital and Empowerment. [Nepal Heifer]
- ▶ Kieran, C. B. Gray, and M. Gash. 2018. Understanding Gender Norms in Rural Burkina Faso: A Qualitative Assessment. Grameen Foundation. [Grameen]
- ▶ Mulema, A. 2018. Understanding women's empowerment: A qualitative study for the UN Joint Programme Rural Women's Economic Empowerment conducted in Adami Tulu and Yaya Gulele Woredas, Ethiopia. [JP-RWEE]
- ▶ Nigussie, L., L. Debevec, A. Negera, A. Mulema and B. Boonabaana. 2017. Economic Empowerment of Rural Women: Qualitative study for the UNJP in Adami Tulu and Yaya Gulele Woredas: Qualitative research study report. [JP-RWEE]
- ▶ Krause, B., S. James, A. McCarthy, and M. Bellemare. 2018. Livestock-Enhanced Project Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (Pro-WEAI) Baseline Report for Trias and Maisha Bora: Maisha Bora/Trias Program for Women's Food Security in Impoverished Maasai Households. Savannahs Forever Tanzania. [TRIAS]
- ▶ Bagayoko, M.L. 2018. Mali Home Gardens Qualitative Gender Study. The World Vegetable Center. [World Veg]
- ▶ Akhter, S., D. Rubin, E. Myers, A. de Brauw, B. Kramer, and M. Murphy. 2018. Qualitative Research on the Bangladesh Agricultural Value Chains (AVC) project. [AVC]