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MEASURES FOR INTEGRATING GENDER DIMENSION IN WATER MANAGEMENT IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT – Women play a vital role in the daily economic life of Turkey. In rural areas, they contribute to agricultural activities in addition to household duties and non-agricultural activities such as industry and services. Turkish rural women play vital roles in every step of the agricultural production. In spite of their substantial contributions to agricultural sector and other sectors, however, their role however has been overlooked for years due to socio-cultural reasons and their reproductive role.

It is a well known fact that a country's development level is on par with women's status and development. The foundation of the republic in 1923 and the reforms thereafter such as legislation for the women's rights and equal access to modern education thereafter have greatly improved the women's place in the society. However, women, who are more numerous in the agricultural sector than the other sectors, have been the least beneficiaries of this development. Measures for the advancement of women in rural areas, therefore, are of paramount importance in improvement of their status in agriculture and in the society as a whole.

Most of the women in the agriculture (89%) are unpaid workers in family enterprises. In families with no land, most of the seasonal workers are women. Therefore these women are not covered by social security system. One way to eliminate all these weakness is to encourage and help women to be entrepreneurs. Preparation of specific education programs, easier access to loans and credits, means to increase production, improved marketing of their products and organizing institutions (women associations or cooperatives) for jointly sharing their incomes are all required to achieve these goals.

The role of women in water management issues such as irrigation, compared with other agricultural activities is limited due to cultural reasons. Irrigation which is considered to be a heavy duty work is considered to be unsuitable for women. Although there are many women agricultural engineers, irrigation specialists and social workers in governmental and non-governmental organizations that are involved in irrigation and drainage, their numbers in policy making levels are far less than desirable. There are many excellent and successful examples on women and water management throughout the world, therefore one wonders why this should not be the case in Turkey. There is a definite need for research on grassroots level for determining the problems and priorities, and also finding solutions for water and gender issues such as home water use, water saving, agricultural water use, and rural drinking water management. Policies are required to increase awareness on water use and why water and contribution of women is one important mean for development.

In rural development projects capacity and sensitivity building in grassroots level is required in order to establish gender equality. The main goals should be the questioning and explanation of the importance of water as a valuable resource and a important mean for development, establishing the woman farmer identity, and education of the educators.

The objective of gender analysis is to integrate gender issue in large development schemes especially in those that are based on water resources development such as the Southeastern Anatolian Project. The foremost objectives are determining the gender problems in water resources development projects and offer solutions, analysis of potential and actual changes in these development schemes, analysis of gender roles and integration of gender issues in these projects. The target group consists of planners, researchers, policy makers, technocrats (central, local, vocational organizations, NGO's and private sector). Policy makers in the water management agencies should be encouraged to develop policies based on sound understanding of gender issues. They also should include women in every step of the irrigation and drainage schemes, right from planning and implementation of the project to the management.

Key words: Water management, gender, Turkey, role of women.

INTRODUCTION

Demand for water is increasing very rapidly in the entire world but water supply is decreasing day by day due to improper and inefficient use, pollution, population growth etc. Water management subjects, therefore, should be given more attention to preserve water resources, continuity of sustainable agriculture and healthy generations. To realize these, women must have equal rights with men in decision making processes related to water management due to their critical roles (like productive, reproductive and community) in agricultural production and community life. They are collectors, users and managers of water in household as well as farmers of irrigated and rainfed crops. On the other hand, they have considerable knowledge about water use. Unfortunately this knowledge is generally ignored by decision makers.

Women are not considered as an active participant in almost all development projects, but they are the hidden power of rural life as mothers, farmers, managers, and organizers etc. Women play important roles especially in water management. They are collectors, users and managers of water, not only in household level but also in irrigated agriculture, except for cash crops. Due to cultural limitations in the society, women are excluded from the projects related to irrigation or technical context. The truth is women are very successful in all agricultural activities including water management, when their husbands migrate to other cities to work or when they pass away. Therefore women should be the key components for development projects related to water management and irrigation.

Measures for the advancement of women in rural areas, therefore, are of paramount importance in improvement of their status in agriculture and in the society as a whole. The role of rural women in water management, obstacles related with water management from the point of women view and some suggestions are analyzed in this paper.

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF RURAL WOMEN IN TURKEY

Women play a vital role in the daily economic life of Turkey like other developing countries. In rural areas, they contribute to agricultural activities in addition to household duties and non-agricultural activities such as industry and services.

Most of the working women (70%) are in the agriculture sector and 89% of them are unpaid workers in family enterprises (SIS, 2001). In families with no land, most of the seasonal workers are women. Therefore these women are not covered by social security system. Illiterate women rate is 31.20% while men's rate is 9.75% in rural areas. Participation to decision making processes of women is very low (6.32% in economic decision and 2.36% in social decision) in rural areas (SPO, 1993). Average household size is 5.39 in rural parts of Turkey (SPO, 1993). As a result, rural women have generally secondary position in society but they have a lot of responsibility on their shoulders. According to some research conducted different regions in Turkey, their daily working time change between 9 and 14 hours (Sarpturk, 1990; Ozcatalbas, 1994; Abay et al, Ordu, 1995; 1996; Kantar, 1996; Oguz et al, 1998;). Women however are not seen as farmers or active participants. Most of the extension activities, except for home economics activity, are directed to men and most of the agricultural development projects take into consideration men alone except in the last years. This situation is due to traditional patriarchal structure and low educational level of women. Besides, most women prefer not to talk in the presence of foreign men (i.e. extension worker).

ROLE OF RURAL WOMEN IN WATER MANAGEMENT AND THEIR EXCLUSION

The role of women in water management issues such as irrigation, compared with other agricultural activities is limited due to cultural reasons. Irrigation which is considered to be a heavy duty work is considered to be unsuitable for women, especially in cash crops. Rural women usually deal with irrigation or water just for irrigation of their family garden and in domestic use. This means that women have active role in water management when production is made for subsistence economy or home consumption. In this context, women have invisible manager role in water management. Although most of the people know this situation, they do not create any program that include women in water management especially in governmental levels.

Other important side related with women is that many educated women who are agricultural engineers work in government agencies. There are many women agricultural engineers, irrigation specialists and social workers in governmental and non-governmental organizations that are involved in irrigation and drainage but their numbers in policy making levels are far less than desirable. There are many excellent and successful examples on women and water management throughout the world, therefore one wonders why this should not be the case in Turkey. One reason is women generally omitted from projects especially related technical concept and irrigation projects/activities because of cultural limitations like patriarchy, importance of male child, secondary place of women in society and etc. Development planners or policy makers have generally focused women's reproductive, in other words domestic roles and they did not consider their productive roles in agriculture, water management, marketing and so on. Table 1 shows that importance of women in water management in their productive and reproductive role. Actually, women are very successful if they have given a chance in the economy and decision making etc.

Table 1. Role of women/men and institutions in water management based on women's productive, reproductive and community roles

Productive roles in WM	Women	1.Agricultural Activities (irrigation in subsistence economy)	2.To give a birth
	Men	1.Agricultural activities (irrigation in market economy)	--
	Ins.	1.Agricultural activities Take into consideration men as a target group	2.To give a birth (A lot of activities about family planning on desirable level)
Reproductive roles in WM	Women	1.Agricultural activities (cleaning of barn, preparing winter vegetables, to collect rain water in scarcity)	2.Daily works (Cleaning of house, bathing, collecting drinking water, cleaning clothes and dishes)
	Men	--	--
	Ins.	1.Agricultural activities (Home economics courses related milking and winter preparation)	2.Daily works (Home economics courses related sewing and carpet weaving)
Community roles in WM	Women	1.Socialization of children (Effective use of water, collecting water, sanitation)	2.Knowledge transferring to next generation and other women
	Men	--	--
	Ins.	--	--

According to Table 1, women have an important place in rural life but men deal with just production activities when a market conditions occur. Unfortunately, women learn these roles unconsciously from their surroundings and especially from elderly women in family. Because of this, women can give damage to water sources due to lack of their formal and informal education. Besides, governmental activities are not at desirable level for women. It is concentrated generally on sewing courses which is preferred generally by single young girls. Married women do not have time due to heavy productive and reproductive roles.

Another reason for the exclusion of women from plan and programs is that household heads are generally men and they control farm economic resources and labor. At the same time, allocation of household income is done by male. Therefore planners take into consideration directly male in their study and women can not do anything or participate to any activities without permission of their husbands, fathers, elderly male child or male relatives. But we can ask a question that how women can do every role when they husbands pass away or simply migrate to another city to work or get old and etc. (age is an important criteria for women to have a right in family). The answer is very a simple one; first it is tradition and prejudice and second is economic dependency.

HOW WOMEN SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN WATER MANAGEMENT

The objective of gender analysis is to integrate gender issue in large development schemes especially in those that are based on water resources development such as the Southeastern

Anatolian Project. The foremost objectives are determining the gender problems in water resources development projects and offer solutions, analysis of potential and actual changes in these development schemes, analysis of gender roles and integration of gender issues in these projects. The target group consists of planners, researchers, policy makers, technocrats (central, local, vocational organizations, NGO's and private sector). Policy makers in the water management agencies should be encouraged to develop policies based on sound understanding of gender issues. They also should include women in every step of the irrigation and drainage schemes, right from planning and implementation of the project to the management.

In rural development projects capacity and sensitivity building in grassroots level is required in order to establish gender equality. The main goals should be the questioning and explanation of the importance of water as a valuable resource and an important mean for development, establishing the woman farmer identity, and education of the educators.

One way to eliminate all these weakness is to encourage and help women to be entrepreneurs. Preparation of specific education programs, easier access to loans and credits, means to increase production, improved marketing of their products and organizing institutions (women associations or cooperatives) for jointly sharing their incomes are all required to achieve these goals.

There is a definite need for research on grassroots level for determining the problems and priorities, and also finding solutions for water and gender issues such as home water use, water saving, agricultural water use, and rural drinking water management. Policies are required to increase awareness on water use and why water and contribution of women is one important mean for development.

We make some suggestions in international, national and universities levels:

a. International Institutions

International institutions should prepare special projects according to every country's development level and needs and should take women and men together as a target group. Every country has specific gender issue features like Turkey has its own unique conditions. Some studies, for example conducted by FAO in Tanzania (FAO, 1996), village women irrigation committee has been established for women's integration to water management. This kind of project is not suitable for Turkey because of patriarchy and male dominancy. Therefore international institutions should focus firstly on educational activities for the empowerment of women and women's participation in research must be encouraged by researchers. Secondly, they should organize educational projects for women since most of the women do not have a right in society and they do not know sanitation conditions and irrigation techniques. Generally water supplies are polluted by animals, humans and etc. or irrigation is carried out with wrong techniques.

b. National/Governmental Institutions

In general, national/governmental institutions, should work in harmony with each other to provide coordination in country level. Women and men should integrate together to these kinds of projects. It simply means that planners have to accept women as farmers and accept their economic roles or economic contribution to family budget in their mind. Therefore firstly, planners or researchers should be educated. Existing role expectations for both women and men are very important criteria for the success of these projects.

These kinds of projects should focus especially on:

- Easily access to water for women both for drinking and irrigation water,
- Sanitation and hygiene conditions for women's reproductive roles,
- Irrigation techniques,
- Participation of women to decision making processes in family related to natural resource allocation
- Family health and economic use of water (sometimes storing of water).

Educational activities related to empowerment of women, gender awareness etc. must be given to rural people. Both women and men should be taken into consideration together in this educational activity. However, women are dependent on their husband. So, first of all men have to be persuaded

about women's active participation in rural life, especially on economic/productive roles. Women's needs should be determined to avoid increased workload on women.

In addition to the measures mentioned above, some suggestions can also be made at institutional levels. Ministry of Agriculture is the most responsible institutions due to its active role in Turkish agriculture. This institution should be the pioneer for the empowerment of women in rural areas as a top governmental agency since governmental institutions' deeds are more acceptable than private sectors' in rural areas. In this context first of all, extension workers and women units located in agricultural ministry-SPO and SIS should concentrate on more activities in rural areas. Government should prepare educational materials (slides, brochures etc.) and distribute to all related units. Water pollution, sanitation of water in daily use, preserving of ground water, water collection methods in mountain areas in times of scarcity should be emphasized in educational materials. Along with these activities, primary school children should receive seminars about water resources and its conservation since they are the future generations. At the same time, women and men should be considered as one interdependent unit and farmers. Number of women extension workers should be increased to reach women or to get acceptance of husbands due to the conservative nature of the rural society. On the other hand, Center of Irrigation Education which is established in the Ministry of Agriculture should improve firstly their own philosophy about water management, and increase the number of women workers in their institutions. This institution's main responsibility is to educate irrigation teachers to work in the fields. If these people become sensitive on gender issues, future studies can be more successful in water management.

Irrigation associations are other important institutions which are directly in water management. These institutions are directly located in rural places or near the rural areas and they have direct relations with rural people. Farmers, who have irrigated lands, have to members in these unions. These institutions have also women farmers but most of them are symbolic members because their husbands, male relatives or adult sons generally till the women's land, especially in cash crops. In other words all important decisions, especially in water management, are taken by males. Women generally gain these lands by means of inheritance from husbands or their own family. Most women, even if they deal with agriculture actively, define themselves as house women. This unfortunately means that they also do not accept their selves as farmers and decision makers. Therefore workers, working in these institutions, should prepare educational activities which are in parallel with government materials prepared for rural people to empower women. On the other hand, number of women workers should be increased and existing women workers be it technical or social should be directed to rural areas or fields instead of office work. Once again, the attitude of these institutions against the women status in water management and in all roles should be changed with educational activities by government organizations.

All of these governmental institutions have to give special consideration for GAP (Southeastern Anatolian Project) region since main objective of GAP is based on irrigation and women living in this area have secondary places both in family and society.

c. Universities and Non-Governmental Organizations

Universities and non-governmental organizations have more flexible structure than government. Therefore, these institutions should pioneer in developing research centers related to women's empowerment or improving the existing centers. On the other hand, universities and non-governmental organizations have to work in harmony with international and national institutions' plans and programs.

Universities should conduct sociological research to determine societies' needs related with water management in rural areas. Questions as to "how women be integrated to water management" or "what are the obstacles women face in water management" can be answered and solutions can be offered more safely once these studies are underway or completed. Universities should organize workshops, seminars and intensive courses on water management and gender in local or national levels by women centers and/or agricultural faculties. Agricultural economics departments and agricultural structures and irrigation departments should include lectures on their programs related with gender issues and water management.

Non-governmental organizations, especially those related directly with women, should focus rural women firstly. Most NGOs put women in a general category however rural and urban women' needs differ from each other. Their studies conducted in rural places mostly are concentrated on employment problems, family planning, role of women in society etc. These subjects should be improved by addition of conservation of natural resources, irrigation and gender subjects. They can organize more effective studies in rural place in coordination with universities since they have less bureaucratic obstacles than universities. Non-governmental organizations should also organize educational activities for women, young girls and men together with universities and/or governmental institutions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Turkish rural women play vital roles in every step of the agricultural production. In spite of their substantial contributions to agricultural sector and other sectors, however, their role however has been overlooked for years due to socio-cultural reasons and their reproductive role. Water management especially is seen as men's work and women are excluded from this practice. In fact, women deal with water not only for agricultural purposes but also for daily consumption like drinking, cleaning etc. Although there are women agricultural engineers in government agencies, these women are not considered as a water managers, actors or interest groups. To solve these problems or to include women in water management education must be the foremost priority for all people related with water management.

The following recommendations are to be put in place for gender sensitive water management: 1. Planners and managers of national and regional water resources policies and programmes must be more gender sensitive. Water policy makers should be trained to work in a gender inclusive manner. 2. Gender data must be collected on sound basis for determining needs and priorities in water management with joint studies by universities, governmental agencies and NGOs. 3. All water development projects must include gender impact assessments. 4. Laws and policies that ensure women's rights in both water and land must be put in place. 5. Affirmative action must be forced for balanced representation of women and men in all water management organizations. 6. All water management organizations and government agencies should target capacity building and training to build capacity of women to manage water and related financial resources to improve efficient water use; and increase education of women. Governments and water management organizations must provide training and credit for women to improve efficiency of land and water use for food production. 7. Water management policies should not discriminate anyone on the basis of sex and it should be based on a participatory approach. Men and women should be equally involved in managing the sustainable use of water resources and sharing the benefits. 8. For fairness, Turkish women needs to be made stronger by having them more say in water management policies and their participation broadened. 9. Ministry of Women should be established to solve all of the problems related to women.

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