

GENDER DIMENSIONS OF RURAL EMPLOYMENT: DIFFERENTIATED PATHWAYS OUT OF POVERTY

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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- Gender patterns of rural employment across regions
- Changing patterns but persisting gender inequalities?
- Policy issues

Gender patterns of rural employment across regions

- Sub-Saharan Africa: mostly agriculture-based; own account farming most common form of employment for both the sexes, followed by non-agricultural wage work for men and non-agricultural self-employment for women.
- South Asia: mostly agriculture-based; women relatively more engaged in agricultural wage employment than women in any other region; more likely than men to be engaged in agriculture, more likely to be unpaid for work on their own family business than in any other region.
- Middle East and North Africa: transforming countries; women mostly self-employed in agriculture whilst men mostly in non-agricultural wage work
- Latin America: mostly urbanised; only region where the ratio of rural women's non-agricultural employment to agricultural employment is higher than the corresponding rural men's ratio

Some of the factors pushing women into a disadvantaged economic position relative to men:

- employment segmentation;
- the gender gap in earnings;
- fewer hours of paid work but overall larger work burdens

Employment segmentation

Agricultural sectors:

- Common pattern across regions: women tend to be the main producers of food whilst men manage most of the commercial crops, not without women's (often unpaid) contributions
- Women participate also in commercial farming but within a rigid division of tasks (stronger in South Asia)
- Asymmetry: men may take over female crops but there seems no evidence of women taking over management of previously male crops, except in rare cases when males in the migrate
- Agricultural wage workers, working conditions for women harsher than for men?

Non-agricultural sectors:

- Most prevalent form of rural non-agricultural employment for women in all regions, particularly in Latin America, is domestic services
- Petty trade more common for women in Africa, Latin America and some South East Asian countries
- In South Asia most female non-agricultural activities are home-based, particularly in parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan

Wages

- Gender–disaggregated data on earnings from agriculture very difficult to find
- Gender gaps seem to be lower in some of the non traditional agricultural export sectors (Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, and Mexico).
- Gender differences in wages more marked in Afghanistan and in Pakistan
- Gender gaps largest in earnings from agricultural self-employment (Ghana, Costa Rica and El Salvador).

Work burdens

Table 11: Average hours per week spent by the adult rural population on SNA and non-SNA work in Benin, Madagascar, and Tanzania (various years)

	Benin		Madagascar		Tanzania	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
SNA work*	35.6	33.3	28.0	42.0	33.1	38.8
Of which water and fuel collection	9.9	2.4	4.7	3.1	4.4	1.4
Non-SNA work*	22.7	7.6	24.5	4.7	29.2	9.5
Total work	58.3	40.9	52.5	46.7	62.3	48.3

Changing patterns but persisting gender inequalities?

- Women seem to be participating in the general movement out of agriculture but at a slower pace than men
- **Migration** appears to play a more important role in South East Asia and Latin America than in other regions
- Migration and involvement in profitable non–farm activities more prevalent among rural male workers.
- Asymmetries
- Role of remittances? Are female–headed households receiving remittances more able to engage in decent and productive work relative to other female–headed households?
- The diversification of the rural economy may be more advanced in some areas of Latin America. **Rural non–agricultural employment** pathway out of rural poverty but need to understand better when it can lead to greater gender equality.
- More prevalent among women than men in LA, but women in the lowest paid and most vulnerable forms of work, such as domestic services (e.g. Brazil, pay of domestic workers below agricultural wage rate).
- Education a key determinant of access to high–productivity rural non–agricultural employment, especially for female workers

Changing patterns but persisting gender inequalities?

Cont.

- **International trade** affects most regions.
- Rural women seem able to benefit from increased international trade more through the labour market than through the product market
- Smallholders (many female farmers among them) have been facing hardship
- Rural wage employment in large corporate farming emerging as important source of employment for rural women, especially in Latin America, but evidence about working conditions and pay in these new sectors is mixed
- How to best ensure enforcement of labour standards in NTAEs? (South Africa a good example but enforcement especially among female workers very weak in most countries)
- An unchanging aspect of the gender division of labour across regions: **division of domestic responsibilities**

Policy issues

- In all circumstances, countries and settings, urgent need to implement measures for reducing and redistributing the burden of unpaid work. Unpaid work limits women's access to all forms of rural paid employment. Need to differentiate between different types of unpaid work for policy purposes
- Promoting female education in rural areas. Formal education a more significant pathway out of poverty in transforming and urbanised countries (Latin American, South East Asia) and in relation to non-agricultural work. Appropriately designed gender-aware extension services more important determinant of labour productivity in agriculture-based contexts, especially in Africa.
- In both formal and non-formal education, rural girls and boys treated differently and often channelled into different subject areas, reinforcing gender labour market segregation: needs to be challenged through innovative teaching methods
- Constraints in access to land, credit and technology mutually interdependent. Lack of access to land not the most binding constraint for women's agricultural productivity, especially in land abundant countries. In land scarce countries, such as India, innovative approaches involving integrated programmes supporting landless women's collective purchase of land, together with credit mobilisation and environmentally friendly farming practices, promising but limited examples

Policy issues (cont.)

- Different policies to support market access. Policies aimed at producers: improve market contacts and information on prices; strengthening of property rights; better access to credit; and technical assistance. Policies for wage workers: extending labour legislation; ensuring better enforcement; greater awareness of legal rights; and more training.
- Public works programmes can be effectively used to support gender equality in rural employment: must fulfil the two objectives of (1) making it easier for women to participate on equal terms as men and (2) creating assets that reduce aspects of women's domestic workloads. Promising public works initiatives in India, South Africa and Argentina. A better understanding of the key determinants of success is required. Concern: does employability of women effectively improve once the scheme ends?

Some points on method

Analysis

- A full understanding of gendered dynamics in rural employment can only be gained by considering interactions between the household and the market
- People are involved in multiple activities. Multiplicity of tasks characterises rural women's work more than men's work.
- Attention should be given to separating out individual from average household well-being impacts, which may differ because of unequal distribution of rights, resources and time between genders

Policy approaches

- Policies must give consideration to women's bargaining position both in the household and in the labour market. Poverty is linked to weaker incorporation in both.
- Gender constraints are many and interlinked. Need for integrated policy approaches