

Use of vignette-based interviewing approach to explore the reasons behind low participation of women in chickpea related trainings in Ethiopia

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GENDER program in the CRP Grain Legumes

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Background and situation

Ethiopia is the largest producer of chickpeas in Africa and is ranked as the seventh largest producer worldwide, contributing about 2% to the total world chickpea production and accounting for over 90 percent of Sub-Saharan Africa’s chickpea production (Kassie, et al., 2009; Pachico, 2014). Chickpea, locally known as *shimbra*, is one of the major pulse crops (including faba bean, field pea, haricot bean, lentil and grass pea) in Ethiopia and in terms of production it is the second most important legume crop after faba beans. It contributed about 16% of the total pulse production during 1999-2008 (Kassie et al., 2009). There are

two types of chickpea produced globally, namely *desi* and *kabuli* chickpeas. *kabuli* chickpeas have a larger cream-colored seed with a thin seed coat whereas the *desi* type has a smaller, reddish brown-colored seed with a thick seed coat (Kassie et al., 2009). Although *kabuli* types can be profitably adapted in the country, Ethiopia traditionally produces largely the *desi* types.

Ethiopian chickpea production is expected to continue growing, especially with the increased investments in the chickpea value chain from government and donors. In Ethiopia, chickpea is widely grown across the country and serves as a multi-purpose crop (Shiferaw et al., 2007; Kassie et al., 2009). First, it fixes atmospheric nitrogen in soils and thus improves soil fertility and saves fertilizer costs in subsequent crops. Second, it improves more intensive and productive use of land, particularly in areas where land is scarce and the crop can be grown as a second crop using residual moisture. Third, it reduces malnutrition and improves human health especially for the poor who cannot afford livestock products. It is an excellent source of protein, fiber, complex carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals. Fourth, the growing demand in both the domestic and export markets provides a source of cash for smallholder producers. Fifth, it increases livestock productivity as the residue is rich in digestible crude protein content compared to cereals.

However, since the 1970s, various initiatives were started to accelerate the adoption of improved varieties in Ethiopia. For instance, the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR) started cultivating partnerships with major actors along the value chain to accelerate the adoption of improved varieties (Abate et al., 2011). In addition, primary co-operatives received breeder seed and multiplied them using contract farmers to enable the dissemination of *Kabuli* varieties for the 2005/06 production year (Shiferaw et al., 2007). Moreover, under the Tropical Legumes II (TLII) programme various, chickpea research and development activities were conducted, including participatory varietal selection, field days and demonstrations as well as training programmes for farmers and extension staff (Ganga Rao et al., 2015). TLII focused on major chickpea producing areas in the Shewa region for the upscaling of suitable chickpea varieties and marketing strategies (Asfaw et al., 2010). Notably, researchers working in the TLII under chickpea research and development programme in Ethiopia highlight that there is very low participation of women in training events organized by the program compared to men. This is despite the program instituting a policy that for every training, every male farmer would be required to attend with the wife. Even then, a training of about 70 participants would have only 5-6 women; and yet the scientists would 'see' the women working on the chickpea fields [Ojiewo, 2015: Personal communication]

Studies have shown that successful participation in technology transfer projects has positive benefits in raising the self- confidence of rural women (Rathgeber, 2011). Moreover, access

to technology and improvement of farming and production systems can have positive benefits not only from an economic perspective but also in helping to enhance the status of women.

The technical knowledge of men and women in rural communities is usually based on the work that they do. According to Rathgeber (2011), women are particularly knowledgeable about seed diversity and plant breeding since they often have responsibility for collecting and storing seeds from one season to the next. In Ethiopia, Chickpea production is the responsibility of the household in general (Rao et al., 2009). In the TLII study areas, Rao et al. (2009) found out that men and women appear to make decisions regarding the sale of chickpea. Women are less familiar with modern markets and feel powerless to influence them. They are hampered by cultural norms, and the lack of access to information on new technology, prices, demand, etc. Unlike their husbands, they are rarely given training in modern small-business management. Studies on agricultural extension have highlighted a number of challenges in reaching rural women (Ragasa, 2014).

It is against this background that this study aims to explore the factors contributing to women's low participation in TLII chickpea training programmes in Ethiopia. First, the study will involve conducting literature review using published and grey literature from studies elsewhere to understand the possible reasons for women's low participation in TLII chickpea training programmes in Ethiopia. Secondly, insights from the reviews will then be used to inform the design of vignette-based interviews that will be used to guide the exploration of the issues on the ground through primary data collection so as to have a clear understanding of the study objective.

Literature review

This section entails a review of literature on possible factors contributing to women's low participation in agricultural training programmes. It is organized into the following sub-sections: Gender norms and ideal images of a good husband and wife; Women identity as farmers; Sexual identity of the trainers/extension officers by the farmers; Organization of the training versus women's triple gender roles and literacy levels; and equitable participation versus membership.

Gender norms and ideal images of good husband and wife

Norms around gender stem from a society's ideal values of what it means to be a woman or a man (Chattier, 2014). These norms include everything from cultural beliefs to expected behaviors and practices. Social norms of gender are in constant dialogue with women's agency and may determine women's capacity to act. However, social norms and their influences on women's and men's decisions are difficult topics for even well designed

household surveys to explore effectively. Yet the scarcity of information on the role of social norms limits one's understanding of gender equality for possible policy action, and thus makes such information crucial (Chattier, 2014).

A study by Chattier (2014) among the Fiji people in Australia, found out that the adult focus group discussants explored stereotypical notions of a good wife and a good husband, reflecting their most idealized views of gender roles and norms. Domestic responsibilities were clearly the dominant tasks assigned to women as the female discussants noted: *"a good wife looks after the children, does all housework, keeps her husband happy by doing everything, contributes to household income somehow and thinks about husband and children first"*. Similarly, the male discussants highlighted *"a good wife stays home, takes care of the house and children, cooks, clean and feeds livestock, and most importantly, the woman should do this by goodwill"*. Set against the many ideal qualities of a good wife, all the male and female focus group discussants in the same study depicted a good husband as the *"real head of the household"*, *"employed"* and *"always working hard to provide for his family"*. However, the participants also noted due to ensuring the family's economic wellbeing, gender roles were shifting, as there seems to be a more liberal and equal relationship between husband and wife whereby husbands help in domestic chores, look after children and find themselves loving and caring towards their wives. Chattier (2014) further posits that the expectations of a good wife have become more relaxed and now include a provider role in addition to women's traditional care duties. However, many men feel their male authority and dominance is being challenged on multiple fronts and they appear to be resistant to such change.

In an attempt to explore the prevalent gender norms surrounding women's and men's lives in the communities across 20 countries through focus group discussants defining a "good wife" and a "good husband", Boudet et al. (2013) identified consistencies across both men's and women's focus groups, and across the urban and rural contexts, and across different economic, political, and social circumstances of the 20 countries that were engaged. Men and women held similar views of the wife's and husband's roles. Almost every participant described a good husband as the highest household authority and responsible for being a benevolent decision-maker and a good provider for the household. The focus group accounts of a good wife depicted her first and foremost as an obedient, caring, and respectful mate to the good husband. She is responsible for all the housework and the care of all members of the household, and is held strictly accountable for her domestic responsibilities day in and day out. However, the researchers saw some signs of flexibility around these norms whereby in some places, the norms were relaxing, and some of the factors that were driving this relaxation seemed to be associated with increased education levels, women's participation in the labor force and urbanization.

Evidence shows that invisible structures constrain and shape the environment within which men and women operate (Mudege et al., 2015). The underlying gender norms and cultural norms mediate access to information. For instance, in a study by Mudege et al. (2015) they found out that men regard themselves as representatives of the households during training and, to some extent, extension officers reinforcing these views by using biased recruitment methods for training. Gender norms influenced the decision-making processes in the home, which in turn affected the ability of women to access training opportunities for seed potato multiplication and potato production in general.

Women identity as farmers

Studies have shown that empowerment of the most marginal farmers, and rural women in particular, is considered important to provide these most vulnerable groups with the means to voice their needs and desires and to take action so that they can influence rural and agricultural development for the improvement of nutrition and food security (De Schutter, 2009). In a study by Galie et al. (2013) on women's roles and identity as farmers in Syria in the context of participatory plant breeding programme, they found out that understanding who is considered a farmer, at the household and community levels, is biased by gender norms. Typically, throughout the study period men were named as "farmers" and women as their helpers, by both men and women alike, despite women's substantial role in farming and their increasing role in agronomic management. The social meanings associated with "who is a farmer" revealed stereotypical associations between men as the breadwinners and therefore farmers and women as family caretakers. One woman only referred to Islam as ascribing to women a modest role in the household, and subordination to their husbands. Three women mentioned that the appropriate role of women was in the domestic sphere as housewives. Only one unmarried woman, whose family's economy depended solely on agriculture and who publicly performed the traditional male activities defined herself a "farmer". She asserted that her role as a farmer, as a consequence, was considered by the village to have become 'unsuitable' for marriage (Galie et al., 2013). The five men interviewed stated that men were the farmers and did almost all the work in agriculture but added that women contributed to seed selection and manual work. Moreover, women were not interested in agriculture because there were no economic benefits. For these reasons they argued against the participation of women in participatory plant breeding.

Studies on agricultural extension have also highlighted the perception bias that "women are not farmers" as a challenge in reaching rural women (Ragasa, 2014). This persists even

though women are engaged in a wide range of agricultural activities. A report by World Bank and IFPRI (2010) also found a strong evidence that for a cultural perception that “women don’t farm”. In Ethiopia for instance, given that extension agents were evaluated on how many farmers they could get to adopt technology packages, they preferred to work with household decision makers, who in a husband-wife household was always the male (Ragasa, 2014).

Sexual identity of the trainers/extension officers by the farmers

According to Rathgeber (2011), agricultural extension continues to play a key role in technology dissemination. However, some national systems are still gender insensitive. For example, in rural Zimbabwe, despite a large proportion of female-headed households, only 10 percent of women farmers participate in agricultural extension training (Ponniah et al., 2008).

Research with rice farmers in South and Southeast Asia found that most extension agents interacted only with men so women did not receive important information and were unable to take advantage of opportunities such as the chance to earn income from renting out drum seeders.¹ A report by World Bank and IFPRI (2010) documents that in Ethiopia, women farmers may not be comfortable dealing with male extension workers or with the time and location of the training. This concurs with findings from a study by Due et al. (1997) in Tanzania who found out that many women farmers preferred to work with female extension agents as they were free to discuss problems with them and they could better accommodate their time preferences for meetings than with male extension agents. Some men also preferred female extension officers and others had no preference as to male or female officers.

There have been some successful efforts to institutionalize extension to female farmers. For example, Nigeria has established Women in Agriculture Units with female extension staff throughout the country. These units identify the information and technical needs of rural women and provide training and technology dissemination, working through local women’s groups (Ponniah et al., 2008).

Organization of the training versus women’s triple gender roles and literacy levels

Ethiopia women are actively involved in all aspects of their social life. Women are both producers and procreators and they are active participant in the social and cultural activities

¹ IFAD, Technical Assistance Grant No. 424 for IRRI, Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Thailand, 1999-2004

of the community. However, the important roles they play have not always been recognized (Tegegne, 2012). However, women's work in the agricultural sector has often been erroneously documented as marginal and they have been considered more as consumer than producers. Women have secondary status within the family and in the society, and hence are continued to be regarded as an appendage to the family and as consumer but not as producers (Tegegne, 2012).

However, Rathgeber (2011) notes that new technologies can have uneven impact on women's labour burdens. In India for instance, the adoption of high-yielding varieties of rice and wheat after the Green Revolution was disadvantageous for many of the poorest women from landless or near landless households as they were paid less than men. Women were also given the more labor-intensive tasks of weeding, transplanting and harvesting.²

The timing by which the trainings are carried could also have implications as to why women do not attend trainings given their triple gender roles. Findings from a study by Majali (2012) showed that women did not have time to commit to crop production activities or other kinds of agricultural activities, because they had other responsibilities they needed to take care of. They explained that between household responsibilities, working full time jobs and taking care of their children and husbands, they did not have enough time to dedicate to farming as well. Other women in the same study argued that their household responsibilities which include taking care of the whole family were too demanding to also maintain home gardening, which requires a lot of time.

In Ethiopia, one of the documented challenge of reaching rural women by agricultural agents is the perceptions that if extension services are given to the member of the family, and in most cases a man, then the information will trickle down to the rest of the household (Bank and IFPRI, 2010). However, men do not necessarily discuss production decisions with their wives or transfer extension knowledge to them, and if extension information is tailored to men's crops or priorities, the information may not help women.

Ragasa (2014) noted that in Ethiopia, women generally have lower levels of formal education, and this hampers their ability to take part in extension activities requiring reading and arithmetic skills. Findings from another study by Tegegne (2012) in Ethiopia showed that the place of women in the society is complex, and involves many interrelated problems such as high illiteracy rate.³ According to him, illiteracy is one of the contributing factors that influences women's role in agriculture. Other factors includes: women's dependence on their husband, ignorance, low social status and traditional religious and cultural dominance.

² FAO Focus. Women and Food Security. n.d. <http://www.fao.org/focus/e/women/green-e.htm>

A study conducted by Gundu (2009) in a rural area of Zimbabwe also reveals that one of the major factors that affect women in farming is illiteracy. It was argued that this constrained one's access to needed farming information. Gundu (2009) argues that even though there may be available reading material for farmers who want to improve themselves women in the village are ultimately limited by their illiteracy. Gundu (2009) observed that illiteracy among respondents seriously inhibited the respondents' ability to access and use agricultural information to achieve and sustain household food security. She further notes that the illiteracy situation limits women's capacities to access agricultural training, credit, participation in economic activities. Also, lack of education also affects the reception of services such as extension, as generally, adaptation and diffusion of innovations is often slow among the less literate populations in society (ibid). From these insights, one can conclude that the literacy level of a farmer begets his/her participation in agricultural training activities.

Equitable participation and membership

Evidence suggests that one key gender constraint relating to inequitable participation in the associations or trainings is the membership criteria (Rubin et al., 2009). Membership criteria sometimes discourage women's active participation, by insisting on a single membership for an entire family in the name of the head of the household or by requiring demonstration of legal land ownership. In one Kenyan dairy producer association, for example, both of these conditions were in force. Even though women were the active managers of dairy production on the family farms, their husbands were the legal association members. When membership criteria limit participation of some potential members, they do not gain the benefits of improving their information about market opportunities and prices, getting extension services, or accessing finance—all of which limit their productivity.

Findings from a study by Mudege et al. (2015) in Malawi showed that men who were not group members and did not see the benefit of training could prevent their wives from attending training. Married women were regarded by men as likely not to understand new information and the men felt it was better for them to attend so that they could 'lead the woman'. In addition, it was mentioned that married women were not interested in training because they knew their husbands would attend and learn. However, Mudege et al. (2015) further reiterates that these stereotypes about women not being able to learn did not extend to single or widowed women as women in male-headed households were also often limited in the kinds of decisions they could make, especially as far as participation in training was concerned.

Vignettes as qualitative data collection tools

Vignette based interviewing approach is a technique used in structured and indepth interviews as well as focus groups, providing sketches of fictional (or fictionalized) scenarios. It is a suitable vehicle for presenting narrative stories as it is a focused description of a series of events taken to be representative, typical, or emblematic in the case you are doing (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The respondent is then invited to imagine, drawing on his or her own experience, how the central character in the scenario will behave. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the creation of the vignettes is based on the assumption that none of the characters depicted exist, yet all could. Vignettes thus collect situated data on group values, group beliefs and group norms of behavior (Bloor and Wood, 2006). Vignettes can take the form of a 'snapshot' scenario (Bloor, 1991) or a story that unfolds through a series of stages and can be presented to participants on paper, videotape and via computers. This study will use vignettes to take stock by hypothesizing constraints to women's lack of participation so as to understand the gender-based constraints. It will adopt a series of vignettes representing seven scenarios revolving around a typical Ethiopian couple called Getachew and Gete as presented below.

Scenario 1: We are going to talk about Getachew, a son in this village. He is about to get married to Gete, a girl from a village far away, from another community. Gete is visiting Getachew's family this week. Today she is meeting with Getachew's aunties and they are having a heart to heart conversation; they want to advice Gete on how to be a good wife to Getachew.

Questions:

1. What are the important things that Gete should do 'to be a good wife' in the family?
2. What are the important things that Gete should not do 'to be a good wife' in the family?
3. What are the important things that Getachew will do, 'to be a good husband' to Gete?
4. What are the important things that Getachew will not do 'to be a good husband' to Gete?
5. Who is the role model [a woman] in the village that Gete should strive to be like? [not a name, but a description of who she is like]
6. Who are the women that Gete should avoid in the village [not the names, but a description of who they are like]

Scenario 2: Getachew and Gete have been married for the last 6 months. After farming on a joint farm with Getachew's parents, they have been given their own land in the village.

They have 3 acres of land. They need to plant some crops.

Questions:

1. Who will choose what crops they will plant on their farm? If Getachew, why? If Gete, why?
2. What crops will they plant?
3. Where will they get the seeds from? How will they obtain the seeds? Who will obtain the seeds?
4. Who will be responsible for ploughing? ? If Getachew, why? If Gete, why?
5. How will they plough? With animals? With the hands?
6. Who will be responsible for planting? ? If Getachew, why? If Gete, why?
7. Who will be responsible for weeding? ? If Getachew, why? If Gete, why?
8. Who will be responsible for harvesting? ? If Getachew, why? If Gete, why?
9. When the crop is harvested – how much will they have use at home? How much will they sell? Are there other things they will do with the harvest [church, gifts etc]
10. Who will decide how the harvest is shared? Who will be in charge of the income from sales? (Getachew or Gete? Why?)
11. Who will be described as the ‘farmer’ in the chiefs record? Getachew? Gete? Of both? Why?
12. Who is the role model farmer that Gete and Getachew would be advised to emulate? [not names, but the descriptions]
13. Who are the farmers that Gete and Getachew would be advised to avoid emulating? [Not the names by the descriptions]

Scenario 3: Getachew and Gete have the crop in the granary now. They have a harvest from 2 seasons. Getachew has gone to visit some relatives in another village, and he will be away for a week. While he is away, Gete is excited about some news that the traders in town that is 2km away have brought in an energy saving fire stove. She saw it with her neighbor. Gete was told this fire stove will cost EB100. Gete plans to sell 2 bags of produce, to a man in the local shopping centre, to raise enough money to buy the fire stove.

Questions:

1. Is it okay for Gete to sell their farm produce and plan to buy a fire stove? Why? Why not?
2. Is it okay for Gete to negotiate the sale price of their produce with the man in the local trading centre?
3. What is the most acceptable way for Gete to carry out this transaction?

4. Is it okay for Gete to travel 2km away to go and buy an energy saving fire stove?
5. What will Getachew think of his wife when he comes back?
6. What will the aunties think of Gete when they hear of this information?
7. What will Gete's parents think of her when they hear of this information?
8. How is the relationship between Gete and Getachew likely to be affected by this action?

Scenario 4: Getachew and Gete have been living together for 5 years now. They have 2 children. Gete's mum has requested to see her grandchildren. Getachew has given money to Gete to go with the children and visit her mother. Getachew is bored at home, so he joins his brother to go to the market 5 km from home. He finds the new shop has a strong motorbike. The price is EB999. He figures out if he sells 9 bags of produce he can afford to buy the motorbike. He goes back home, takes 9 bags of produce to sell and buys a motorbike.

Questions:

1. Is it okay for Getachew to sell their farm produce and plan to buy a motorbike? Why? Why not?
2. Is it okay for Getachew to negotiate the sale price of their produce with the man in the local trading centre?
3. What is the most acceptable way for Getachew to carry out this transaction?
4. Is it okay for Getachew to travel 5km away to go and buy a motorbike?
5. What will Gete think of her husband when he comes back?
6. What will the aunties think of Getachew when they hear of this information?
7. What will Gete's parents think of him when they hear of this information?
8. How is the relationship between Gete and Getachew likely to be affected by this action?

Scenario 5: Getachew and Gete have now been blessed with 5 children. They are farming 5 acres of land [2 of which are rented]. They heard an announcement that the ministry of agriculture now has an office in the village. The chief has invited all farmers to attend a training about new chickpea varieties. The trainers will be men officers, who are coming from Addis Ababa. Getachew wants to attend to training. Gete also wants to attend the training, because chickpeas is her crop on their farm. The training starts at 10am.

Questions

1. Do you think that Getachew will go for the training? Why? Why not?
2. Do you think Gete will go for the training? Why? Why not?
3. How will Getachew feel about Gete saying 'I want to go because chickpea is my crop'?

4. How will the aunties feel about the statement that Gete made 'I want to go because chickpea is my crop'?
5. How will Gete's parents feel about the statement that Gete made 'I want to go because chickpea is my crop'?
6. What will the community feel about Gete attending the meeting among many men?
7. Do you think there will be many other women attending the training? Why? Why not?
8. Supposing Getachew tells Gete, you can't go to the meeting, you have to stay home...do you think she will bargain to go for the training meeting?

Scenario 6: The chickpea promotion program has been going on in the village for 2 years. In those 2 years, only 3 women have attended the trainings consistently. The government sends a female extension officer from Addis Ababa to come work with the women farmers. But the women farmers don't go for the meetings that she calls. She doesn't want to give up, so she comes to the village and she has a meeting with the women at the well; she is asking for help from the women to understand how she can work with them more.

Questions:

1. Will the women listen to the female officer? Why? Why not?
2. What will the women need the female officer to understand about their village, the culture and the traditions that make them not to go for the meetings?
3. If the female officer wants to have a program with the women in the village; what should she change that the men officers have been doing?
4. What should she do to ensure that most of the women in the village come to her meetings?
5. If she changes according to the advice of the women, is it possible that the women in the village will actually attend her meetings?
6. Will the women have their own meetings or will they join the men's meetings? Why? Why not?
7. If they are women meetings alone, what will be the best time for the women meetings?
8. How long should they be?
9. Who should facilitate such meetings – male officers or female officers?
10. Which location would be the best point to have the women's meeting? Why?
11. The three women who have been attending the training meetings in the last 2 years, do you think they will join the women meetings or they will continue with the men's meetings?
12. If Gete wants to join the women's meeting, will Getachew support her in that decision? Why? Why not?

13. If Gete wants to join the women's meeting, will the aunties support her in that decision? Why? Why not?
14. If Gete wants to join the women's meeting, will her parents support her in that decision? Why? Why not?
15. What will the men in the community support the women's only meetings? Why? Why not?
16. Will the church leadership in the village support the women's only meetings? Why? Why not?

Scenario 7: Getachew and Gete have been married for more than 15 years now. They have been farming chickpeas for a long time now. The Ministry of Agriculture has sent a word that they would like the farming community in the village to organize themselves into farmer groups. The groups will work out modalities of farming chickpeas, getting improved seeds, harvesting and marketing together. Each member will have to open a bank account to have the money from sales channeled into the bank accounts. The community will be meeting tomorrow to form the groups.

Questions:

1. Will the community be open to forming mixed groups – women and men groups?
2. Will the community prefer to have men groups separate or the women groups separate?
3. Do you think Getachew will support the idea of farming as a group? Why? Why not?
4. Will Gete support the idea of farming as a group? Why? Why not?
5. Will the aunties support the idea of farming as group? Why? Why not?
6. Who will be registered in the farmer group? Getachew? Why ? why not? Gete? Why? Why not? Both? Why? Why not?
7. Who will be registered in the bank account? Getachew? Why ? Why not? Gete? Why? Why not? Both? Why? Why not?
8. Will the women break up their group to join this new group? Why? Why not?
9. Will the men break up their learning group to join this new group? Why? Why not?

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