Understanding Gender in Agricultural Production: An Annotated Bibliography for the Case of Afghanistan

Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization

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APPRO takes full responsibility for any omissions and errors.

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About APPRO

The Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organization (APPRO) is an independent social research organization promoting social and policy learning to benefit development and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. APPRO is registered with the Ministry of Economy (Registration Number: 1212) as a not-for-profit organization and headquartered in Kabul, Afghanistan. APPRO’s mission is to measure development progress against strategic reconstruction objectives and provide insights on how to improve performance against the milestones set by the government of Afghanistan and the international donors. APPRO is staffed by personnel with many years of collective experience in various facets of development and scientific research.
Introduction

This annotated bibliography is part of the research project, “Multi Donor Trust Fund for Trade and Development: Understanding the Gender Dimension of Trade Markets in Afghanistan”, funded by the World Bank. The overall goal of the project was to the constraints and explore opportunities for women to participate and improve their position in the various steps of selected value chains in farm and non-farm production. The outcome of the study was to feed into the gender mainstreaming strategy of the Government of Afghanistan and the international donor community involved in the reconstruction effort.

The intent in compiling this annotated bibliography was to take stock of the available literature and highlight the elements that could be utilized in developing integrated approaches in analyzing gender and / in value chains, typically examined in isolation. The publication of this annotated bibliography as a public document is to assist other researchers, the Government of Afghanistan officials, the international donor community and others who have an interest in developing systemic approaches to economic development and those who have a particular focus on gender in economic development.

The literature search was guided by the following questions:

1. Which activities are fulfilled by women and men and thus which roles / positions do women and men have in selected value chains? Why do women have these roles / positions, as opposed to the roles / positions held by men?
2. How can the value-added in activities fulfilled by women be increased and how can women upgrade to new activities with higher value-added and income? What are the opportunities for men and women as far as access to markets and upgrading to higher value activities? What are the specific opportunities for women? At what point(s) in the value chains is there potential for women to gain higher financial rewards and/or assume more responsibilities in decision making over production and/or marketing?
3. What are the constraints for women and men concerning access to markets at the local, national, regional and, if appropriate, international levels? What are the constraints in moving up to higher value-added activities in the value chains under study? What are the specific constraints to women? Are there policy constraints on women’s roles in these value chains, in addition to cultural and social constraints?
4. How can the position of Afghan producers and specifically of Afghan women be improved? Within the value chains analyzed, what are key steps and potential interventions to improve their position?

The remainder of this document is the synthesis of all the papers reviewed for this project. The reference section at the end of this document contains the details on each of the publications reviewed.

This paper examines gender in agricultural markets under the impact of agricultural liberalisation policies. The main findings and arguments of the study are supported by empirical evidence from Zimbabwe, Guinea, Uganda, Ghana, and Tanzania.

The author argues that markets are not abstract or neutral entities but real processes of exchange embedded in social institutions, including gender relations. Further, it asserts that the benefits of agricultural market liberalisation have skewed towards medium and large scale commercial farmers, large-scale private traders/wholesalers and processors, and transporters and other providers of market services. Since the majority of women’s activities are concentrated in small scale farming, processing and petty trading, they have gained relatively limited benefits from liberalisation. Moreover the constraints on women’s benefits from market reforms are not only due to the small size of their enterprises, but women are also disadvantaged because both state and market institutions exhibit gender biases which prevent them from expanding the scale of their operations and diversifying their activities; and because, due to intra-household inequalities, they often do not control the proceeds of their labour. A set of research and policy agenda items conclude the article.


The analysis of value chains needs to incorporate gender as an essential element if their functioning is to be fully understood. This paper provides an initial contribution to this research agenda. Its focus is on the employment and retail ends of a buyer-driven chain, using the horticulture value chains linking Chile and South Africa to Europe as specific examples.

The paper starts by exploring how a gender dimension to the analysis of global value chains could be developed at a conceptual level. It further states that a gender approach requires the positioning of value chain analysis within the socio-economic context in which value chains are embedded in different countries. Central to the framework is the flexible employment and social perception of female work. Because of their ties to the household, it is deemed “socially acceptable” that women can be drawn into employment for one period and return to their “household responsibilities” the rest of the year, leaving them little opportunity to upgrade or advance in economic value adding work. The framework applies this concept to both the supply and demand aspects of the value chain.


This paper explores the gender sensitivity of codes currently applied in the African export horticulture sector from an analytical perspective that combines global value chain and gendered economy approaches. Through an analysis of these two approaches, it develops a “gender pyramid,” which provides a framework for mapping and assessing the gender content of codes of conduct. The pyramid is applied to codes that cover employment conditions in three commodity groups and countries exporting to European markets: South African fruit, Kenyan flowers, and Zambian vegetables and flowers. It concludes that the gender sensitivity of codes needs to be greatly enhanced if they are to adequately address employment conditions relevant to informal and especially women workers.

The paper combines existing but largely separate bodies of knowledge on ‘vertical’ and ‘horizontal’ aspects of value chains in a framework centred on changes in value chain positions including inclusion, exclusion, and changed terms of participation and non-participation as experienced by small producers and agricultural businesses and their communities in developing countries.

It develops a conceptual framework to overcome shortcomings in ‘stand-alone’ value chains, livelihoods and environmental analyses by integrating the ‘vertical’ and ‘horizontal’ aspects of value chains that affect poverty and sustainability.

The vertical analysis focuses on dimensions of value chain such as governance and coordination, standards and certifications, functional division of labour, linkages, performance requirements, and the implications of these dimensions for rewards and risks and the possibility for improving these for “upstream” chain actors in developing countries.

The horizontal analysis involves poverty dimensions like analysis of income and resources, livelihood strategies and employment, vulnerability and risk, inequality, and examination of the terms and (pre)conditions for inclusion, participation, exclusion and non-participation into a value chain. It also includes environmental dimensions such as the availability of natural resources, the impact of the local environment on health, and life cycle assessments.

Gender is treated as part of the horizontal analysis. The key elements of the gender dimension are the incorporation of gender sensitivity into all elements of the framework, recognition of the importance of gender differences for changes in value chain position and the impacts on poverty and environment, and a view of the economy that includes both market-oriented activities and reproductive (unpaid) work that underpins productive work.

The integration of the horizontal and vertical dimensions enables us to understand the governance structure of the value chains, identify action points, promote upgrading, assess both risks and rewards, and consider multiple dimensions of horizontal elements through a broader framework.


The article attempts to overview the World Bank’s gender development policies on women, especially in the developing countries. It outlines the standard critiques of the Bank’s policies by social scientists and feminists. For instance, the negative impact of the Structural Adjustment Programs on the poor in some countries such as Zambia; biased support of the World Bank policies by the wealthy countries; and the falling of additional burden of childcare on women due to the introduction of user fees for education and health services as a result of privatization are among the issues discussed.
The paper continues with a discussion of the challenges to the effectiveness of the revised Bank policies since 1999 to address the previous shortcomings. According to the article, there are two constraints to gender development policies of the World Bank. The “external” constraint relates to the macro-economic policies of Western financial institutions, which encourage the privatization of government services, import liberalization, the elimination of agricultural subsidies, and pro-market measures. The “internal” constraint are products of the social structures prevalent in the less developed countries that manifest in the economic, religious, and political arenas.

The authors recognize the important role of the World Bank in drawing attention to the gendered nature of economic development, but point to two main flaws in the Bank policies. First, their policies do little to improve the position of women in less developed countries and, second, the Bank fails to explicitly acknowledge and address the religious and political sources of local governments’ resistance to gender equality.


The report describes a tool for rapid value chain mapping of three agricultural products in Uganda. The objective of mapping the maize, cotton, and sunflower value chains is to clarify and quantify the associated risks and costs value adding agricultural production. The report is intended as a means to facilitate the introduction of focused, viable, and sustainable sources of finance for agricultural value adding production through extending the services of the current finance institutions.

The study finds many low risk, short term lending opportunities for transportation, processing, marketing, and input supply have to date received little attention from legitimate lenders. It also concludes that several opportunities exist for financing value adding production when the input and output markets are better understood by lenders, governments, and the international aid agencies. The study concludes by calling for a revision of existing policies so as to relax or eliminate taxes on lenders in agricultural finance and the provision of greater levels of credit to all points of the agricultural value chain.


The paper critically examines the extent to which neoclassical and structuralist approaches to the economics of development are gender-aware, and finds both paradigms seriously deficient. It examines some of the factors that hinder the production of a fully gender-aware development economics and suggests ways in which improvements can be made.

It is argued that both macro and microeconomics within the neoclassical framework fail to address gender issues as the former is gender neutral while the latter is based on the assumption that rational humans make rational choices based on sound and complete information. According to the authors, preferences are not gender-neutral and they are heavily influenced by the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the environment in which the choice makers operate. In the context of a society characterised by gender inequality, women’s perceptions are constrained in choice making insofar as their own interests, needs, and
rights, undermine their bargaining powers within the household as well as in the society. Conversely, domestic and other productive work by women remains neglected at the macroeconomic level. Changing these inequities requires more in-depth understanding of the gender aspects of the division of labour in production. This necessitates gender disaggregation at the occupation level, household, as well as commercial level.


This overview looks at a number of DAC (Development Assistance Committee) members’ initiatives “in light of their abilities to transform women’s economic activities, increase their access to markets, and ultimately to secure equitable and pro-poor growth by ensuring that women are not excluded from the benefits of the development.” To this end, the authors provide a typology of donor approaches to gender and development. The organizing framework used to group different approaches is the “entitlements and capabilities” analysis of poverty and deprivation. Entitlements are defined as the bundle of resources that an individual or group of individuals commands for the purpose of consumption, production, or exchange. Capabilities are the individual’s or group’s freedom and abilities to deploy their resources.

The paper identifies the gender-related constraints that limit equitable access to or outcomes in four types of markets: labour markets, in which individuals sell their labour and are remunerated by wages; finances markets comprising a broad range of products and services offered by financial intermediaries, such as banking, credit, savings, insurance, pensions, and mortgages; goods markets that summarize both the market for inputs into production processes and outputs from production processes; and services markets, which encompass the delivery, purchase, or hiring-in of services that can enhance or upgrade productive activities.

A major finding is that projects that focus on capabilities are disproportionately likely to have emerged from processes that analyzed gender inequalities and sought to address gender-based exclusions or barriers to market entry and participation. Projects that focused exclusively on entitlements were more likely to have emerged without an explicit gender analysis or focus.

Further findings show that activities concentrate disproportionately on microfinance, diversifying agricultural production and rural livelihoods. Far fewer projects address training and workforce development; labour market intermediation; and generalizing financial instruments for insurance, social security, and pensions. The majority of projects and programmes pursue an entitlements approach concentrating on direct inputs such as credit, storage, and transport. Fewer projects and programmes are based on a capabilities approach to increase women’s ability to enter markets, negotiate with buyers and sellers, and position themselves higher up the value chain. Projects that provide capabilities and entitlements may be more successful when nested within programmes and sector wide activities that address structural exclusions and barriers.
A number of recommendations conclude the paper:

- use of gender analysis tools to design, implement, and evaluate projects and programmes
- undertaking a value chain analysis to identify opportunities for women’s broader participation in markets
- improving micro- meso- macro-linkages
- pursuing a lifecycle or livelihoods approach
- supporting entitlement and capability programmes
- promoting clustering and networking
- expanding access to credit and financial services, and
- addressing informality


The document outlines the national strategy for security, governance, economic growth and poverty reduction in Afghanistan between 2008 and 2013. Separate strategies in each sector such as security, justice, energy, education, health and nutrition, agriculture and rural development, social protection, and private sector development and trade are to guide the reconstruction and development efforts. A number of cross-cutting issues such as regional cooperation, counter narcotics, anti-corruption, capacity development, environment, and gender equity are also elaborated. The gender equity goals in the ANDS are prioritized as follows:

- to attain the 13 gender-specific benchmarks for the Afghanistan Compact/I-ANDS, including the five-year priorities of NAPWA;
- to realize the gender commitments that are mainstreamed in each of the ANDS sectors; and
- to develop basic institutional capacities of ministries and government agencies on gender mainstreaming

The strategy is aimed at improving women’s socio-economic status as well as their participation in decision-making at various levels within the government, community, and the household. The long term strategic vision for agriculture and rural development focuses on social, economic, and political well being of rural communities, especially poor and vulnerable people, while stimulating the integration of rural communities into the national economy. Establishment of micro, small and medium size rural enterprises, sustainable management and use of natural resources, access to safe drinking water, expansion of road networks, and small-scale irrigation systems are some of the areas on which the strategy aims to work.

**Grace, J. 2004. Gender Roles in Agriculture: Case studies of five villages in northern Afghanistan.**

The purpose of this report is to contribute to a greater understanding of the roles women and men play in the different stages of agricultural production as well as other production and income-generating activities in rural Afghanistan. It also looks at whether these roles change over time, in order to gain a greater understanding of how flexible gender roles can be, what factors can influence their change, and how this room for manoeuvre may be used to improve access to livelihood opportunities.
Through interviews with a number of villagers the authors document the types of activities men and women are involved in including agriculture, livestock management, and non-farm labour such as trade, tailoring, carpet-weaving, hat-making and other.

The paper finds that within the three villages studied, economic and socio-cultural factors such as social stigma, land-owning, economic returns, age, wealth, types of assets, household composition, and to some extent ethnicity affect gender roles. It also argues that economic reasoning can sometimes play a larger role than cultural norms in determining the allocation of labour. Men's control over the sale of agricultural and other products, as well as their view of women's activities as lacking economic value, reduces women's bargaining power within the household.


The paper attempts to provide initial thoughts on integrating conflict-sensitive value chain analyses and interventions in conflict-affected situations. Recognizing the impact of any development project on the peace and conflict environment in a conflict-prone region as inevitable, it puts forward a number of issues to be considered when studying value chains and designing programmes. In the paper three aspects of conflict-sensitivity of value chain are discussed: (a) conflict analysis, (b) identifying value chain/conflict interaction, and (c) options for project design and implementation based on (a) and (b).

A number of questions can be devised to profile the conflict, the main actors, causes and the dynamics of the conflict. The same factors could then be investigated in relation to the value chain by asking, for instance, what relationships exist between the value chain actors and conflict actors or where the overlaps are. In a similar way, the relationship between the value chain and the causes of the conflict can be studied in the context of physical and economic security and vulnerability, geographic reach, war economies, and unemployment. This approach can identify the value chain/conflict interactions at different levels, impact of a wider conflict on the value chain or a conflict present in a value chain, for example. The paper moves on to integrate conflict-sensitive approaches in value chain project design and implementation. Since both value chain analysis and conflict-sensitive approaches follow systematic steps to cover prescribed components such as strategy, design, inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts, the paper suggests that integration can provide a more nuanced and richer approach.


This paper outlines the main gender issues in livestock and discusses a number of important questions () before designing livestock projects directed at mainstreaming gender and empowering women in this sector. The questions for project design range from land ownership, access to capital and knowledge, and ownership of livestock to division of labour, information and relevant indicators, and the role of farmer organizations. Consideration of factors such as the role of women, women's safety, social and cultural norms, women's workload, their access to assets and markets, and role of social networks are among the issues to be considered in project design.

The objective of this handbook is to assist researchers in designing and executing value chain research, with a particular aim at framing a policy environment which will assist poor producers and poor countries to participate effectively in the global economy. The main body of the handbook is divided into three parts:

- Part 1: a broad overview defining value chains, introducing key concepts, and discussing the contribution of value chain analysis as an analytical and policy tool.
- Part 2: describes the theoretical underpinnings of value chain analysis.
- Part 3: lays out a methodology for undertaking value chain research.

The topics discussed include definition and explanation of a value chain and its types, comparison of value chains and its importance, value chains in the context of globalization, key analytical concepts, innovation and upgrading in value chains, value chain analysis, a methodology for understanding value chain research, mapping value chains, governance of value chains, and the role of class, gender, ethnicity, and income groups in value chains. The concluding chapter provides tools on how to conduct value chain analysis and a series of policy implications. The handbook is targeted at both an academic and a practitioner level.


The paper provides an overview of the current (2008) state of the agricultural sector in Afghanistan, challenges and opportunities for improving the sector, as well as a proposal for a multi-year development project to achieve a number of objectives to this end.

The key problems outlined in the document include weak regulatory processes, poor infrastructure, limited access to finance, and security-related issues. Recognizing these problems in connection to existing projects with a focus on the production base in horticulture and livestock in some regional areas, the paper proposes prioritizing strategic market-based interventions to address constraints and improve commodity returns and productivity so as to complement the existing activities. More specific targets are; agribusiness value chain development in core commodities, regional specialization in activities, pilot activities, development of market distribution infrastructure, as well as public-private sector partnership to address the gaps that undermine value chain efficiency and increase transaction costs.


Through a review of secondary data, reports, and surveys, and interviews with market traders, local chamber of commerce and relevant governmental ministries, as well as visits to post-harvest facilities, the authors present an overview of the status of horticultural sector in Afghanistan in the post-Taliban era.

Constraints as well as opportunities to improve the quality and marketing of the products are studied and discussed. It highlights the lack of post-harvest handling, finance, access to markets and information, market infrastructure, market share, and varieties as the major constraints. The absence of well maintained road
networks is identified as the most serious constraint. The study also lists the economically most important crops as raisins, apricots, pistachio, almond, melon, pomegranate, potatoes, onions, tomatoes, okra, and eggplant with specific recommendations on how to increase value adding activity in each of the crops.


This paper attempts to develop a framework for the analysis of gender in value chains by integrating two separate frameworks on gender empowerment and chain empowerment. According to the authors a gender empowerment framework differentiates between the concepts of women and gender and focuses on resources, agency, and achievements. The chain framework, on the other hand, uses a matrix of chain management plotted against chain activities as a tool for strategic thinking about chain development.

Drawing on a number of case studies on different value chains from around the world the authors report that their hybrid framework is useful in understanding different gender and value chain dimensions. For instance the integration of the two frameworks can provide insights into the internal dimensions of value chains such as vertical and horizontal integration, and external dimensions such as gender dynamics in the household and the community and the institutional context including norms, rules, and values.


This study is one out of three case studies by AREU on raisin, carpets, and construction materials funded by the World Bank. The aim of the studies is stated as enhancing the understanding of the role of markets in affecting the prospects for growth and the distribution of the benefits of growth in Afghanistan. The study documents the production and marketing of raisins in Afghanistan based on 35 interviews with grape growers, raisin traders, raisin exporters, government officials and others involved in the production, processing and export of raisins in Mazar-e-Sharif, Kabul, and Peshawar in Pakistan.

After documenting the process of raisin production, trade, and marketing the paper concludes that the quality of the goods and the structure of marketing limit both the current export potential and the value returned to different actors in the chain, particularly the producer. Similar to the other case studies (carpets and construction materials), this paper illustrates that the functioning of markets is preventing greater competition in these trading processes, reinforcing existing structures of control and power. The market constraints increasingly limit the benefits from reaching the less-advantaged producers, and at the same time maintain the position of the producers who already dominate trading in Afghanistan.


The paper presents a “pragmatic approach to identifying opportunities for exportation of horticultural products.” It aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the supply and the value chains, and the major constraints and limitations in the horticulture trade in Afghanistan.
The production of spices and fruits such as cumin, figs, grapes, melon, peanuts, pine nuts, pistachios, pomegranates, raisins, and walnuts are studied and their export opportunities are prioritized based on their operational feasibility and income potential. The authors put products such as dried apricots, cumin, peanuts, pomegranates and raisins at the higher ends of the scales for operational feasibility and income potential in the short term. In the long term dried figs, grapes, and melon score high in income potential but low in operational feasibility.

**Millns, J. 2007. Value Chains for Agricultural Products in Afghanistan.**

The paper takes a broad look at the current status of value chains (producer to consumer) in Afghanistan and the current constraints for private sector investment and growth, particularly in relation to potential import substitution strategies and developing export opportunities for agricultural products.

By listing a number of interventions and studies on value chains by aid organizations and donors including the World Bank, USAID, ADB, and EU over the last few years, the author presents an overview of the value chains in horticultural and livestock products throughout the country. The paper highlights issues such as farmers’ lack of information about proper maturity indices or their inability to grade the products by quality, lack of information about the size and/or appearance of products at the harvesting stage, and the inadequacy of the roads for transporting the products. The paper also highlights constraints relating to markets, organization of production, and finance for value adding activities.

Recognizing the need for rural development and livelihood activities as a requirement for strengthening market linkages, a number of recommendations are made, based on the available information on completed and on-going donor programmes, initiatives to build capacity of the farmers and reinforce an enabling institutional environment, and programmes that include farm management curricula at vocational training schools.


The paper examines the status of high-value agriculture and agro-business in Bangladesh and recommends measures to eliminate/reduce constraints and improve opportunities for development of these sectors.

It outlines the factors deriving the growth of high-value agriculture and related agro-business, including the impact of structural changes in domestic food demand, growing domestic demand for high-value agricultural products, as well as the influence of related global developments. Through a number of case studies in fresh and brackish water aquaculture, small-scale poultry, fruit and vegetable sector, high-value rice, and diary, opportunities and constraints for high-value agriculture and related agro-business are identified and discussed.

Suggested measures to address the identified issues include removing policy distortions and pursuing policy opportunities, upgrading the infrastructure, promoting good governance, improving technology, benchmarking for enhanced productivity and reduced transactions costs, scaling up best practices and lessons learned,
improving consumer and producers awareness of food quality and safety, improving the regulatory environment, better and stable marketing, strengthening market research, creating/strengthening private agricultural organizations for producers, processors and exporters, as well as creating mechanisms for better public/private dialogue and alliances.

**World Bank, FAO, and IFAD.2009. *Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook.***

The Sourcebook is a joint work of the World Bank, FAO, and IFAD. Its purpose is to act as a guide for practitioners and technical staff in addressing gender issues and integrating gender-responsive actions in the design and implementation of agricultural projects and programmes. It reaches out to technical experts to guide them in thinking through how to integrate gender dimensions into their operations.

It aims to deliver practical advice, guidelines, principles, and descriptions and illustrations of approaches that have worked so far to achieve the goal of effective gender mainstreaming in agricultural operations of development agencies.

In the Sourcebook, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, livestock, land and water, agro-industries, and environment are all included in the definition of agriculture. The focus on the agriculture sector includes accounting for the fluctuations of agricultural livelihoods and rural poverty.

The Sourcebook is targeted at key actors within international and regional development agencies and national governments, research communities and non-governmental organizations and, specifically, operational staff who design and implement lending projects and technical officers who design thematic programmes and technical assistance packages.
References


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