

Gender Sensitive Data Gathering Methods

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Learning objectives

By the end of this lecture, participants:

- Will be able to explain the framework for gender planning and data gathering to fellow professionals and justify its use.
- Identify stakeholders and other relevant sub-groups in planning a gender sensitive projects.
- Understand the kind of information necessary to include gender considerations in project planning
- Shows how these can be adapted firstly to be gender sensitive and secondly for use to gather relevant data.

Project Planning Situations

- No one typical or standard approach to planning projects into which gender considerations could be slotted.
- In reality, there are two different types of project planning situations in which gender needs to be considered
- These are:
 - i. Energy technology projects
 - ii. Integrated development projects.

Project Planning – Energy Technology

- Energy technology projects generally promote the use of one or two particular technologies. These are focused on the problems of dissemination and adoption of this type of technology.
- In some ways, such projects can be thought of as supply driven; the purpose of which is to promote certain kinds of energy technology, for the good of a given population.
- In this case, the main question that arises from the gender point of view is, to what extent will this technology bring about positive gender impacts and the involvement of gender roles in the project implementation?

Project Planning – Integrated Development

- Integrated development projects assist communities to develop over a broad range of sectors, of which energy may just be one , and in which energy may be just a component necessary for achievements in other sectors.
- The gender question then becomes, what are the components necessary to achieve the overall goals, including gender goals, and how these requirements can be best satisfied?
- The steps in project planning mainly are:
 - i. identifying stakeholders – who are involved ?
 - ii. Project analysis – what problems and how to solve them.
 - iii. Identifying assumptions and external factors that could influence the project in a negative way.
 - iv. Summing up

The need for data gathering

- it helps in project design and implementation, resulting in better project identification and in increased level of project performance and sustainability.
- Since information for a corner stone of project planning, a number of techniques have been developed in which the community is consulted more closely in data gathering at all stages of project planning, but particularly at the identification stage.
- These techniques have their origin in agricultural extension but have been increasingly adopted by general practitioners of rural development, increasing awareness of gender issues has also meant that these techniques have had to be adapted to take the gender component into account.

Data gathering processes

- The fundamental element of planning for development projects involves gathering of data
- There are many ways of doing this but the methods are mostly used are participatory in nature.
- This is partly because they tend to reflect problems as the local people see them and partly because they are quicker and cheaper than methods.
- These methods are Rapid Rural Appraisal and Participatory Rural Appraisal methods.

Methods of data gathering

These data gathering methods have been designed as an alternative to the traditional quantitative information gathering techniques of which are;

- i. Time consuming
 - ii. Expensive and,
 - iii. Require larger numbers of highly skilled staff, who are in short supply in developing countries.
- In the attempt to obtain sensible data, whilst recognizing constraints of limited time and resources, techniques have been developed which use a qualitative approach, drawing on the research methodologies used in social sciences.
 - The most well known of these is Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) method which evolved from a need to identify priority areas for action.

Qualitative data gathering

- qualitative data do not replace quantitative data entirely but they should compliment each other. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages in most appropriate applications.
- Qualitative methods are particularly useful for dealing with sensitive issues, such as:
 - i. Political influence within a community.
 - ii. Ownership of project resources, and
 - iii. Thus also for many of the gender issues,

However, they are not necessary for obviously quantitative information, such as crop yields.

Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA)

- Rapid Rural Appraisal involves data gathering based on observation and a rapid drive through the area of concern, possibly by rapid interviews with one or two people locally. This has largely been replaced with a set of data gathering method known as the PRA.
- RRA and PRA have their origins in agricultural research, where they were used to identify topics which needed more detailed study.
- RRA has been described as a strategy rather than a method and involves a number of tools to collect local knowledge and cross-check the information.
- RRA is firmly grounded in using the knowledge of relevant local people. Much of this can be considered indigenous technical knowledge or ITK.

Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA)

RRA/PRA consists of a collection of techniques (many of which have been borrowed from the social sciences) including:

- Wealth ranking
- Maps, models, seasonal calendars
- Venn diagrams
- Matrix ranking
- Semi-structured interviews of key-informants
- Participants observation
- Focus group discussions.

Each tool has its strengths and weaknesses. Most involve some form of community or group meeting to share information and there is particular emphasis on listening and learning from local people.

Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA)

- Group interviews are thought to have the advantage of broadening the range of experience but at the same time dampening extreme response.
- In large groups there is always the danger that the opinions of powerful members of the group might dominate, and some people may not like the lack of anonymity.
- Smaller focus groups may overcome these problems and aid those who lack the confidence to speak at large gatherings (for example).
- Smaller focus groups can in addition be composed of all men, or all women, if this helps people to speak out.

Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA)

- It is advisable to use different methods and consult people from different disciplines, and different informants while seeking data on the same problem. This strategy is known as *triangulation*.
- The use of a variety of data collection methods means different kinds of information can be obtained. For example, surveys are good at obtaining factual information from respondents while participant observation could reveal other information about the actual behaviour of certain groups.
- The two sets of information can then be analyzed to try to build up a more comprehensive picture of a complex situation. The use of different methods raises the possibility that conflicting data is acquired.

Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA)

RRA and PRA can be used at any stage in the planning cycle (exploratory surveys, identification, assessment, monitoring and evaluation) but is most commonly used in the early stages of information gathering.

The philosophy of RRA can be summarized by the six "I"s:

- **iterative** goals and processes modified through learning by doing
- **Innovative** techniques adapted to each new problem, rather than used as a fixed procedure
- **Interactive** inter – disciplinary teams; partnership with local people.
- **Informal** avoiding use of pre-determined questionnaires
- **In the community** learning through exchange of ideas with rural people in the field.
- **Involving** bottom-up, participatory

Gathering energy-related gender disaggregated data

- A large number of the standard qualitative data gathering methods of the RRA/PRA kind have been “genderized”, that is to say, adapted specially so that the gender issue is included.
- It is important to recognize that the purpose of these tools is not primarily to gather (or women) but to gather data for a particular purpose, such as energy planning, disaggregated by gender.
- Thus questions about energy use and need, supply, preferences, etc, are asked as in a traditional survey, but care is taken to ensure that the two genders (and other subgroups identified within these two groups) are approached separately to ensure that the voice of both (or all) are heard and data from the point of both (or all) is included.

Tools for use in Field Survey of Gender Aspects of Energy Problems

- The following tools will be described in detail:
- In-depth household interviews
- Gender disaggregated calendars
- Focus group discussions
- Resource map of household
- Venn Diagrams.

In-depth household interviews

- Household surveys are probably the most well known tool, and they involve discussion with members of a household.
- naturally where gender is a concern, care must be taken that women's views are heard as well as men's. in a family with a male head of household, it is normal to begin with interviewing him and to continue with other members (including wife or wives).
- However, if the man is present at the wife's interview, there is often a problem either because she does not like to speak up in front of him and allows him to answer for her, or because she gives the answers she thinks he will want to hear.
- One way around this is to have two interviewers working simultaneously with male and female members of household, at different places in the compound or house.

In-depth household interviews

- ideally, a woman interviewer would interview the women and vice versa, but this is not always necessary. Simply separating the groups is a good step in the right direction.
- It is also important to realize that many rural households have no male head of household. Female heads of households should certainly be interviewed, and a note made of the fact that they are in fact the head of the household, because sometimes female headed households have quite different work and decision-making habits than 'nuclear' types of households.
- Interviews can be as a group or on an individual basis – the latter might avoid domination of the discussion by one member. Even within a group of women, there can be difference paid by junior members to the opinions of the senior wife, for example.

In-depth household interviews

Purpose

Obtain general information on the gender aspects of;

- Livelihood strategies
- Gender basis of use, access, management and control over family resources
- Linkages with broader social, economics and agro- and natural ecological systems.
- Energy priorities and needs.

Value

In-depth understanding of a household to allow analysis of important issues and for follow-up discussions linked to energy aspects.

In-depth household interviews

Framework

Interview can be done either with the help of a structured questionnaire where the questions are formulated beforehand, or using a semi-structured interview.

A structured questionnaire is easy for the interviewer to work with – the questions are all set out – and the results can be directly compared from household to household, and easily tabulated (even computerized).

If the sample size is not too big therefore, it is recommended that semi-structured methods are used. Interviewing starts with more general questions or topics which have been identified before hand. The advantage is that it allows for flexibility to discuss details or issues.

Gender Disaggregated Seasonal Activities Calendar

- This is a calendar that identifies livelihood tasks and categorizes responsibilities by season, gender, age and intensity of activity.

Purpose

It can help identify constraints, such as cultural events or particularly busy periods, which need to be taken into account in project planning. For energy planners it identifies when energy interventions might be made.

Method

This tool can be used with either key informants or community members (they can be interviewed alone or in focus groups).

Gender Disaggregated Seasonal Activities Calendar

- Activities calendars are constructed by the planner / researcher sitting with the individual or the group and asking them in detail what they do at different times of day and year.
- It is better if the planners/researchers do the recording, although it is also possible (and more fun) to do it using a black board or large sheet of paper with coloured pencils, where the informants can put the information in, themselves in discussion with the planner/researcher.
- It is important that calendars vary not only according to gender, but also according to status within the community.

Focus Group Discussion

A focus group is a small discussion group made up of the members of the community being surveyed. This is not a lecture by the planner, it is not even a discussion led by the planner, but a discussion among the members: the planner simply observes. The focus group can be one sex or mixed.

Purpose

The purpose is to provide an opportunity to explore gender roles in various aspects of community life, to understand the diversity of perception and opinion on this topic.

Focus groups however could also be used as a basis for other tools, such as construction of gender disaggregated calendars.

Focus Group Discussions

They can also be used to make assessments of change over time in extent of forest etc.

But in this context, we are thinking of them particularly to elicit gender based data.

- What work do women do
- What access do they have to resources
- What income sources do they have
- What problems do they face, etc.

Focus Group Discussions

Method

The observer needs a notebook and pen (tape recorder is possible but may inhibit conversation and reproduction quality is often poor if the room is not well constructed or group is outside).

The key is to get a group which is not going to be dominated by a particular individual or point of view, since the idea is to canvas a broad spectrum of opinion.

Clearly, in most cases separate groups of men and women should be created, but there is a need to separate people according to class or occupation, since there is a tendency for "low status" people not to express their views strongly if there are more highly educated people in the group.

Focus Group Discussions

Advantage

The advantage of focus groups is that the questions are not directed, as in an interview, by the preconceived ideas of the researcher; But the conversation follows directions which the participants think are important.

Disadvantages>

- i. Can be time consuming.
- ii. Can get off the track completely

Precautions

The group is not necessarily representative of the opinion of the whole community. Great care must be taken in forming groups and in assessing whether they are representative or not.

Resources Map of Household

A resource map gives details about the kind of resources that a household has access to and which enable the members to perform the activities identified on a seasonal activities calendar.

A sketch of the physical layout of the village with common property and resources marked (river, lakes, common land, etc) can be prepared beforehand. Preferably, it should be drawn so that the interviewees house is in the center of the map.

Purpose

To provide detailed information about livelihood strategies and resource management activities of households, including energy supply.

Resources Map of Household

Framework

A facilitator guides the discussion with members of the household to obtain key information about location of resources, drawing arrows to show the flows and connections.

Natural, economic and social resources can be distinguished, if possible by using different coloured arrows or markings.

The type of information to be obtained could be

- Who has access to the resource
- Who owns it
- Crops planted, outputs of the resource
- Inputs used and their sources
- Where are products sold
- Access to common property sources.

Venn diagrams

Venn diagrams are particularly useful in analyzing institutions which have influence in the area to be planned. They consist of larger and smaller circles cut out of paper, which can be made to overlap each other.

Method

Venn diagrams can best be constructed by mixed groups (can also be done in gender segregated focus groups, this might provide a check or triangulation on the validity of those done in mixed groups).

People are asked to name local institutions (both informal and formal ones) and talk about them. A circle is cut for each institution mentioned (as name is written on the paper)

The size (diameter) of the circle represent the importance or influence of the organization.

Venn diagrams

Relationships between organizations (for example, similarity of membership, subordination of one to another, friendliness of one to another etc) are indicated by placing the circles on the ground close, or further from each other, or even overlapping

Purpose

The purpose of the exercise is partly to set people thinking about organizations and partly to alert the researcher the existence of organizations and to their strong and weak points, their reach (who is influenced by them), as perceived by the people.

Time

It may take some time before the group understands the nature of the exercise but people become rapidly taken up and many discussions result.

Venn diagrams

Outcome

The researcher needs to make a drawing of the final result but also to record aspects of the discussion that took place during the total diagram.

This conversation may yield many insights into the nature of local organizations and their potential suitability as partners in the project.

Limitations of RRA/PRA Methods

- PRA and RRA are very popular at the moment and are widely used and praised by development agencies, but as with any methodology there are limitations to their validity.
- The approach itself has been criticized as unscientific due to its potential lack of validation: that is, the results are difficult to replicate.
- It can also be very misleading unless the selection of participants is really representative of the groups whose opinions are supposed to be measured.
- Particularly if the exercise is carried out rather rapidly, the sample of people involved may be highly biased and the results therefore may not be trusted.

Limitations of RRA

- even in informal settings it may be difficult for younger or less senior members of the community to speak up: and the difference in status may not always be apparent to the planner.
- Finally PRA/RRA can be criticized on the grounds that participation, enthusiasm and expectations among villagers can lead to disillusionment if it is not followed up within a reasonable length of time.

Limitations of RRA

- To avoid the problems of validity it is certainly necessary to use a variety of techniques and to combine this with evidence or data gathered elsewhere (for example from secondary sources such as earlier reports, air photos, etc).
- Further, researchers should not be satisfied with one seasonal calendar or one focus group discussion: the exercises should be repeated several times with different people.

Field Work

- Depending on the circumstances, it is important that some of the field methods described in the lecture are carried out in the field. This will involve at least one full day of field work.

Thank you for your attention