A. Gendered interests and preferences

Men, women, the young and the old have different interests in new varieties they want to try, new agricultural practices they want to learn, and they have different capacities and willingness to make financial investments and take calculated risks to implement new activities on their own farm. They also take different approaches to learning new technologies and skills. Without considering gender aspects, our project may work in favour of men from better-off families because: their voices are more easily heard; they can more easily take risks in new investments; and they are more used to the conventional learning approaches offered by development agencies.

Guiding question:

Whose interests and challenges should our planned intervention take into account and why? (e.g. middle income men, poor women, young men, ethnic minority women).

Checklists:

1) Does the targeted crop have gender and/or age divisions of labour?
   • If yes, who are responsible for which activities? (e.g. plowing land, weeding, purchasing fertilizers and pesticide, obtaining and managing planting materials, storage, marketing, processing, food preparation etc.). This helps us understand which interventions are relevant to men and women.
   • What are key characteristics of men and women farmers from poor and better-off households respectively in terms of their involvement in farming activities such as the use of labour, the scale of production and investment, access to influential people, information and knowledge?

2) Which gender/age group is most involved in our planned intervention such as varietal selection, seed, post-harvest etc.?
   • What are potential risks and financial investments for the planned new interventions for the targeted groups? (in particular for women, poor men and young men)
   • What is the level of labour/time inputs required by women and/or men to implement the potential new activities?
   • Does the planned intervention influence/attract girls or boys’ labour? If there are any risks of children dropping out of school for supporting their family through the planned intervention, are there any supporting conditions for their education?

3) How do we address specific social challenges for the targeted groups in learning approaches (e.g. trainings or experiments)? For example:
   • Time constrains for women with childbearing age:
   • Language barriers for ethnic minorities and/or those who have limited education:
   • Social relations among the participants:
   • Are there any supporting conditions for mitigating their constraints?
B. Understanding gender aspects of decision-making power

Taking up new technologies and agricultural practices or participating in training events mean that farmers and their family members often have to change their routine activities which has implications for gender relations. Even if new technologies require men's labour, wives may end up with more burdens as a result of re-assignment of their labour. Some new technologies may be aimed at supporting women but their husband and mother-in-law may feel jealous and therefore they may not approve of her participation in the project. However, both men and women have certain autonomy and decision-making power in some of their gender domains and if additional labour demand or need for more inputs fits into their autonomous domains, interventions are more likely to be accepted.

It is also important to be aware of how decision-making and other types of expressions of power can have gender dimensions at a community level too. In some conservative villages, it may be socially unacceptable that women (and/or young men) become the first person in the village to adopt new technologies. It may also be the case that a small number of men and/or women can dominate resources, which limits the possibilities of other women (and/or young men) accessing and using new technologies. In such a case, field coordinators need to explore how support and opportunities can be directed towards these marginalized social groups.

Guiding question B:
How might new technologies influence relations between family members and relations among men and among women within the village?

Checklists:

1) Have members of the targeted social groups in our project experienced with initiating new activities? Are they already innovators?

2) How likely is our target group to fully benefit from the intervention?
   • Are they dependent on others (participants or non-participants) who may control the benefits?
   • Does the project need to engage with those individuals to improve the distribution of benefits? (e.g. involving husbands in interventions targeting women?)

3) Are there innovation gatekeepers in the community who are very influential in agricultural activities in the community and can create constraints or provide incentives for the uptake of the intervention?
   • Can we influence these gatekeepers to strengthen the incentives for involvement in the intervention?

Using information on gender for interventions

Through applying the checklist, it should be possible for the team to list the gender concerns, challenges and social constraints. In some cases, it may be possible to adjust the intervention to address challenges and reduce constraints. Documenting and reporting on how the team addressed interests and decision-making from a gender perspective can help others apply this approach to supporting marginalized people in the community.

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