

A History of Gender in Agricultural Research and Development

1970s

Esther Boserup publishes *Women's Role in Economic Development*. This work highlighted the role of women in agriculture in Africa. Boserup believed women in Africa were excluded from development efforts. She portrayed women as struggling to satisfy household food security needs using primitive techniques while men were portrayed as market players using modern technology.



source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Esther_Boserup.jpg

Mid 1970s

Farming Systems Research and Extension approaches gained ground. This allowed technical agricultural research to be set within a broad systems framework.

Women in Development (WID), an approach to development projects, emerged. This approach called for treatment of women's issues in development projects.

1975



source: <http://www.unsceb.org/content/first-world-conference-women-1975-0>

First World Conference on Women in Mexico City opened a global dialogue on gender equality and ensured women were included in development activities.

Equality, Development, and Peace was declared the theme of the first UN Decade for Women.

1979

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly. Described as an international bill of rights for women, the Convention defined discrimination against women and called on governments ratifying the Convention to enshrine gender equality into their domestic legislation, repeal all discriminatory provisions in their laws, and enact new provisions to guard against discrimination against women.

Mid 1980s

The gender and development framework (GAD) was developed as an alternative to the WID approach. The approach is a way of determining how best to structure development projects and programs based on analysis of gender relationships. The GAD approach is not concerned specifically with women, but with the way in which a society assigns roles, responsibilities, and expectations to both women and men.

1980



source: <http://www.unsceb.org/content/second-world-conference-women-1980-0>

Second World Conference on Women in Copenhagen identified women's lack of property rights as one reason why progress in development was not achieved.

1985



source: <http://www.unsceb.org/content/third-world-conference-women-1985>

World Conference on Women in Nairobi. After the first UN Decade for Women failed to achieve any substantial equity targets, there were calls for adoption of a new approach. Named 'Nairobi forward-looking strategies for the advancement of women,' these declared all issues to be women's issues.

The Harvard Analytical Framework is issued. The framework assumes that it makes economic sense for development aid projects to allocate resources to women as well as men, which will make development more efficient – a position named the "efficiency approach". This becomes a standard for gender analysis in agriculture.

1990

The Longwe women's empowerment framework, developed by Sara Hlupekile Longwe, is introduced. The framework helps planners understand the practical meaning of women's empowerment and equality and then to evaluate whether a development initiative supports this empowerment. The basic premise is that women's development can be viewed in terms of five levels of equality: welfare, access, "conscientization", participation, and control.

"Gender policies have a strange tendency to 'evaporate' within international development agencies."

1995

World Conference on Women occurs in Beijing. With the theme "women are not the same," this conference shifted the focus from Women in Development (WID) or women-focused issues to Gender and Development (GAD). This was a conceptual shift to empowerment of women, gender justice, and a socially-progressive agenda to address women's subordination. Also expressed was support for women's individual and collective agency—that women themselves become active participants in the change process.

1993

The Moser gender planning framework, developed by Carol Moser, is introduced. The framework is a tool for gender analysis in development planning. It is based on three basic concepts: the triple role of women in society (reproductive, productive, and community-managing), practical and strategic gender needs, and categories of WID/GAD policy approaches.

In 1994, social relations approach, developed by Naila Kabeer, is introduced. This framework applies a socialist-feminist philosophy to gender analysis. The framework is based on the idea that the aim of development is to promote human well-being which consists of survival, security and autonomy. The approach focuses on the interchange between patriarchy and social relationships. The framework looks at the relationships between the government, the market, communities and the family.

2000

The Millennium Development Goals identify promoting gender equity and empowerment as a key objective.

2010

The WorldBank Gender in Agriculture Source Book is issued.

2011



Photo Credit: "Bernard Pollack, Worldwatch Institute."

FAO State of Food and Agriculture: Women in Agriculture – closing the gender gap for development is issued.

'Closing the gender gap in agriculture would generate significant gains for the agriculture sector and for society. If women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20–30 percent. This could raise total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5–4 percent, which could in turn reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12–17 percent.'

2012

World Development Report: Gender Equality and Development issued. It stresses that while there have been gains over the past decades, policy makers in developing countries need to focus on gender gaps where the payoffs for development are potentially the largest.

'Women's lives have improved greatly over the past decades. Enjoying ever higher education, women have greater control over their life choices. But things have not changed for all women or in all aspects of gender equality. First, for poor women and for women in poor places, sizable gender gaps remain, even in education enrollments and fertility, where global progress has been great. Ethnicity, distance, disability, or sexual orientation, among other factors, further compound gender inequality.'

First Global Conference on Women in Agriculture in Delhi focused on five areas for action: advocacy to raise awareness of women's issues, generating an evidence base to show the economic and social impacts of collective action and leadership among women to develop programmes that directly meet women's needs, addressing discrimination through appropriate policies, legislation and enforcement mechanisms; and ensuring that institutions promote women's ownership and control of resources.