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PARLIAMENTARY INSTITUTE OF CAMBODIA
STRENGTHENING PARLIAMENTARY CAPACITY

Research Paper
Regional Fellowship Program

**The Important Role of
Cambodian women in the
Agriculture Sector**

Author: Ms. PHUONG Leapheng, Fellow from Cambodia
Direct Supervisor: Mr. Florent Peter Berend ZWIERS, Senior Instructor

December, 2018

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Abbreviation

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APCAS	Asia and Pacific Commission of Agricultural Statistics
ASDP	Agriculture Sector Strategy Development Plan
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CGSP	Cambodia Gender Strategic Plan
CSES	Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICESCR	International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILO	International Labor Organization
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MOP	Ministry of Planning
NGOs	Non-government organizations
NIS	National Institute of Statistic
NSDP	National Strategic Development plan
ODC	Open development Cambodia
PIC	Parliamentary Institute of Cambodia
RSP	Rectangular Strategy Phase
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division

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1. Introduction

The agriculture has one of the world's largest labor force [1] providing livelihoods for 40 percent of the global population [2]. In Asian countries, more than 2.2 billion people depend on agriculture for their livelihoods [3]. The Agriculture sectors refers to all people and businesses engaged in growing crops, raising animals, and cultivation to support their livelihoods. Agriculture is also considered an important mechanism of economic growth and poverty reduction [4]. However, the people who work in agriculture were seen as the poorest with the difficult living condition such as accommodation, education and health care service [1]. Moreover, this sector is mostly performed by women, who often play an essential role, especially in the rural economy, but their role is often not recognized [4]. Likewise, in 2011, in most developing countries and globally around 43 percent of women are employed in agriculture [4].

Agriculture is not only one of the most important sources of rural livelihoods in Cambodia but is also crucial to the country's economy. Furthermore, the agriculture sector is classified as a primary occupation which employed over 36 percent of the total employed population in 2016 and it contributed almost 27 percent to Cambodia's gross domestic product (GDP). In addition, this sector has the highest women employed compared to other two main sectors (Industry and Service) in 2016 (39.3 percent of women and 33.7 percent of men are employed in agriculture)[5, p.60]. The importance of women's involvement in rural development is stressed by the government and development agencies, but since within the agriculture sector there are many workers classified as unpaid family workers, it is economically challenging for women who work in this sector. For instance, women still lack access to agricultural extension service, which is a service provided by the government that offers new technology and agricultural skill training courses directly to farmers [6].

Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDGs) on "Gender Equality" aims to end all kinds of discriminations and to empower women and girls [7]. Within this goal, target 5.a¹ and 5.b² are to provide women with equal rights for accessing to resources, ownership, service and promote

¹ "Target 5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws."

² "Target 5.b Enhance the use of the enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women."

See: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/metadata-compilation/Metadata-Goal-5.pdf> (P.36)

women empowerment in using information and communication technology[8]. However, Cambodian women still face many difficulties in terms of access to land, extension services, financial services, markets, and technology which result a huge gap of gender in accessing to agriculture resource and service. With this in mind, ensuring that women benefit fully from their participation in the agriculture sector remains a critical issue in order to achieve the Gender Equality [9]. This research paper aims to address the situation of women in agriculture, define the difficulties that Cambodia’s rural women face in the agriculture sector, and review the existing policies related to gender and empower of women in the agriculture sector.

Research Methodology

This paper is based on secondary data in order to respond to the research questions. The researcher reviewed existing data, reports and policies of the relevant Ministries, FAO, UNDP, ADB, ILO, ODC and from academic sources.

Limitations

There were several difficulties related to the lack of up-to-date information or reports related to women in agriculture on the relevant ministries’ websites. Consequently, the data collected in this research paper are mostly the existing data about gender and the agriculture sector from 2007 until 2016.

2. Context:



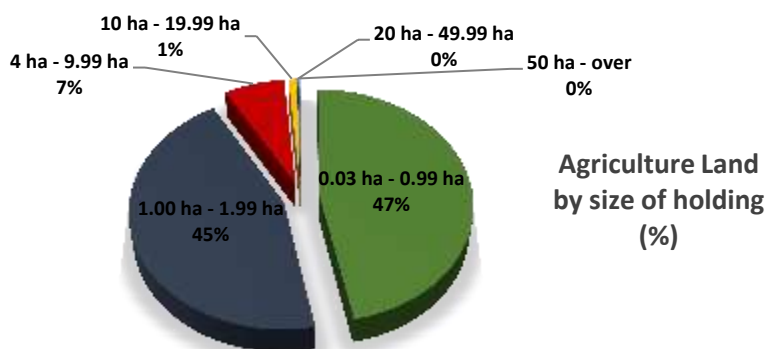
Picture 1: Map of Cambodia by Zones

Source: NIS, CSES, T001, 2018

Cambodia is a lower middle-income country located in Southeast Asia region in between Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam [10]. The land area is 181, 035 km² and can be divided into four zones: Coastal, Plain, Plateau/Mountain, and Tonle Sap Zone [11]. In 2016, Cambodia had a

population of around 16 million people, almost 78 percent of them live in rural area, and women comprise 51 percent of the total population [5, 12]. The majority of rural people are small landholders with less than two hectares per household [13, 14] who engaged in rice-based agriculture, collection of forest products and raising livestock [13]. (See Figure1 for more detail)

Figure 1: Agriculture Land by size of holding (%)



Source: NIS-MoP, Census of Agriculture in Cambodia, 2013

The country's economy is based on three major sectors: Agriculture, Industry, and Service. The agriculture sector is considered as a primary sector and is the engine of Cambodia's economic growth and provides livelihoods for around 80 percent [10] of the rural population. Data from 2008, 2012, and 2015 shows that agriculture is responsible for about a third of Cambodia's GDP and is an important source of work for Cambodians. However, the share of the labor force that works in agriculture is reducing as people move to the other two sectors (see table 1)[10, 13, 15].

Table 1: Agriculture's contribution to GDP and share of the labor force in agriculture in 2008, 2012, 2015 (%)

Year	2008	2012	2015
Sharing of agriculture to GDP	32%	37%	35%
People employed in agriculture	80%	67%	56%

Sources: APCAS, 2010, Gender profile in agriculture households in Cambodia 2008

FAO, 2014, Country fact sheet on food and agriculture policy trends

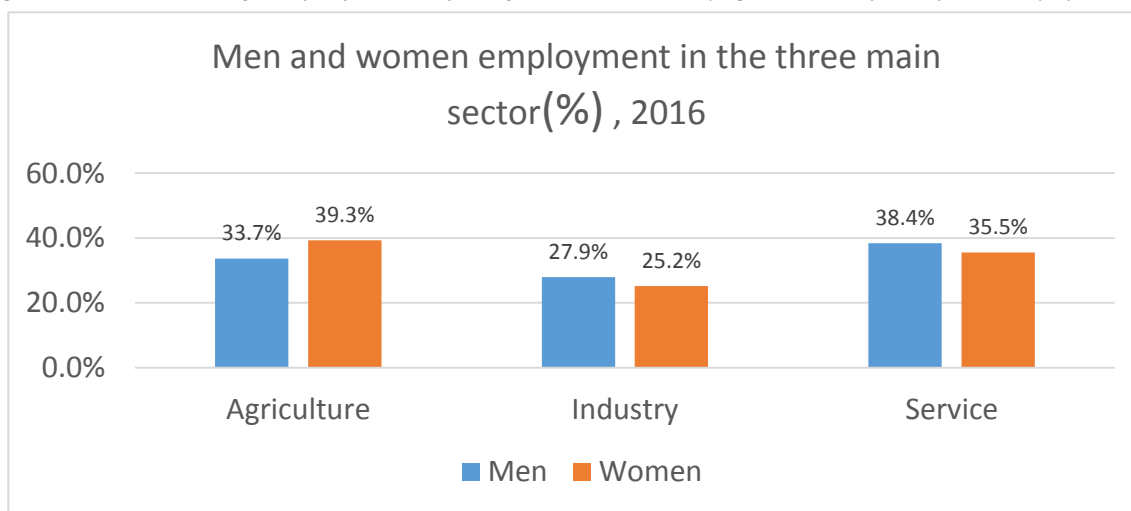
ODC, 2016, Agricultural production

Of note is that between 2000 and 2007, agriculture's share of GDP fell from 37.9% to 31.7% because men moved to other jobs in the industry and service sectors, but then it grew again to 36% in 2012. One possible explanation for rise between 2007 and 2012 could be the global financial crisis, which impacted the Cambodian services industry in particular, but the exact cause is not clear from the sources examined in this research.

However, agriculture remains the main sector with the largest labor force in the country. As an example, in 2012 almost 53 percent of employed women (aged 15-64 years) were in rural areas, and of this group the majority (65 percent) was involved in the primary sector (agriculture, forestry, and fisheries). Moreover, for people aged 15 and older, agriculture was responsible for 66 percent women’s employment and 62 percent of men’s employment. Agriculture is the main source of subsistence in rural areas, not only for the young but also for older people who have low security provisions[16].

Furthermore, in 2016, the agriculture sector employed 33.7 percent of men and 39.3 percent of women while the service sector employed 38.4 percent of men and 35.5 percent of women, followed by the industry sector which employed 27.9 percent of men and 25.2 percent of women (see Figure 2 for more detail) [5, p.60]. This shows that women have a slightly higher participation rate in the agriculture sector are than men, so while men might have moved towards the services and industry sectors in slightly higher numbers, the trend is the same for both genders.

Figure 2: Distribute of Employment by major sectors, sex (Aged 15-64 years), 2016 (%)



Source: NIS,CSES, 2016

In conclusion, agriculture remains responsible for about a third of the GDP and even though more people have moved to the industry and service sectors, agriculture still employs over half the women in the workforce.

3. Overview of Cambodian women in the agriculture sector:

In the preface of a publication from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and fisheries (MAFF), they state that “[t]he Royal Government of Cambodia has long recognized that women are the backbone of Cambodian Society and Economy.” In that same document, the MAFF

states that agriculture is important for economic growth in Cambodia as well as for equity, food security, and for developing the rural economy; all important government goals[17]. The importance is highlighted by the fact that almost 80 percent of the people who live in rural Cambodia are mainly dependent on agriculture, which is a primary source of employment for both men and women. This is especially true for small farm holders who depend on subsistence production. Women very often belong to that group of small farm holders; 70 percent of women who work in agriculture work on their own land or work as unpaid family workers[17]. A FAO working paper in 2011 stated that:

“Rural women often manage complex households and pursue multiple livelihood strategies. Their activities typically include producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, working for wages in agricultural or other rural enterprises, collecting fuel and water, engaging in trade and marketing, caring for family members and maintaining their homes. Many of these activities are not defined as “economically active employment” in national accounts but they are essential to the well-being of rural households” [4].

Meanwhile, unpaid care work in a family or domestic care work is also one of the target in SDG 5 (Target 5.4) which encourages states to “Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate”[8]. Since unpaid care work has limited women’s opportunity to decent works, education, health care, economic empowerment (agricultural services and markets) and impact to their rights to rest and leisure³(based on Article 24 of UDHR[18]) [19] which are all the factors that keep women in low income and poverty. Consequently, beside the other targets, recognizing unpaid care work is also a key target to archive the SDG 5 in the way of reducing women’s household work burden, closing gender gap in care work distribution, and promoting women economic empowerment.

3.1. Trends and statistics:

The ‘active agriculture population’ means the agriculture population aged between 15 and 64 years old. In 2008, the active agriculture population was 61 percent (5,869,633) of the total

³ UDHR “Article 24 Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.” See: https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf

agriculture population (9,509,818)[11]. However, FAO data suggests that the percentage of active agriculture population increased to 95 percent (9,829,727) of the total agriculture population (10,243,904) in 2011 [20] .

In the table below shows the percentage of women among the active agriculture population involved in agriculture in 2008 and 2011. It shows that women’s participation percentages in agriculture remained higher than men’s in all zone in 2008 and 2011, except in plateau/Mountain zones where men participated more in 2011. (See Table 2 for more detail)

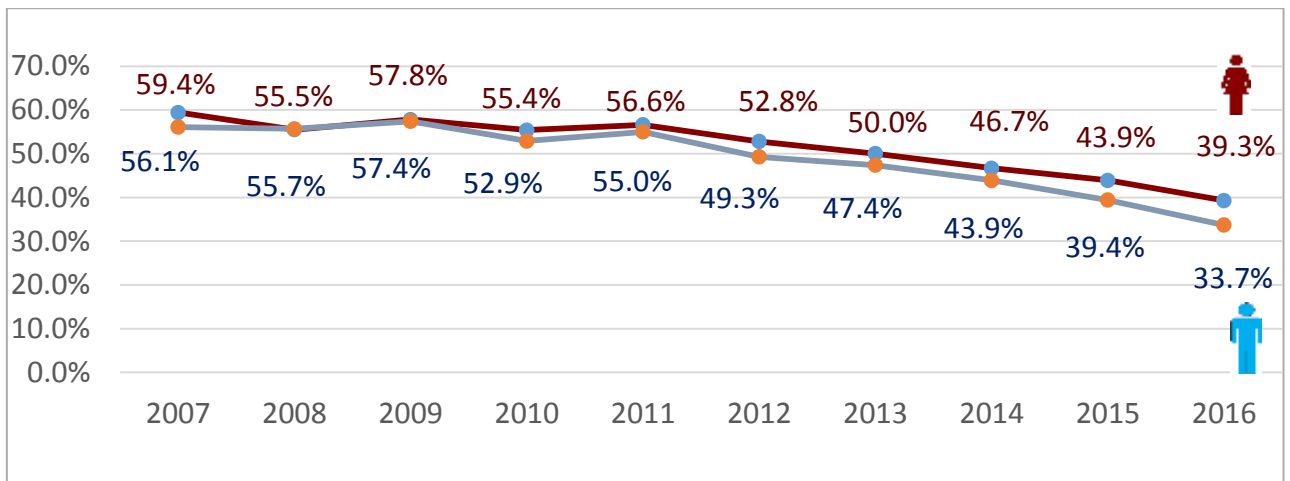
Table 2: Active agriculture population in Cambodia by Sex, by zone, 2008 and 2011 (%)

Zone	2008		2011	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Cambodia	53	47	50.3	49.7
Plain	53.6	46.4	50.6	49.4
Tonle Sap	52.2	47.8	50.7	49.3
Coast	55	45	53.2	46.8
Plateau/Mountain	51.9	48.1	47.54	52.5

Sources: FAO, National gender profile of agriculture households (2010), Gender in the agriculture and rural sector in Cambodia (2012).

The trend of men’s and women’s participation in agriculture from 2007-2016 seems to be one of decline as around 2008-2009 there is a global crisis, and from 2012 until 2016, it is a slowly labour transformation of men and women from agriculture to service and industry sectors. Even though agriculture is a slow developing sector, it remains a significant provider of employment especially for rural women; around 40 percent to 60 percent of the women are involved in agriculture throughout the country. (See Figure 3)

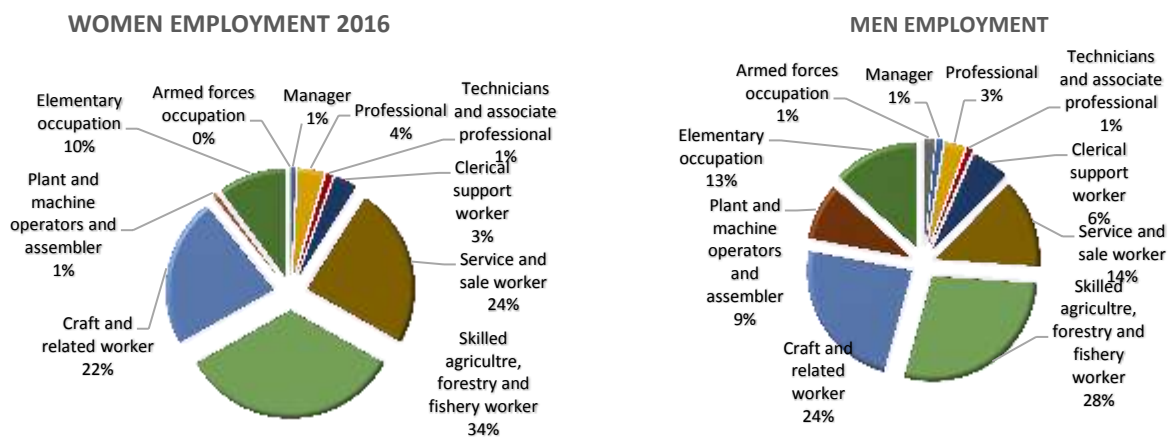
Figure 3: Women employment (Aged 15-64years old) in the agriculture sector, 2007-2016 (%)



Source: ADB, Promote women's economic empowerment (2015), and NIS (CSES 2013-2016)

The trend of agriculture employing a smaller share of the women each year, shown in figure 3, seems to have continued. However, in 2014 women's employment in the agriculture sector still remained higher (proportionally) than men's as 39.3 percent of women worked in agriculture compared to 33.7 percent of men [21]. Likewise, among all the main occupations, "Skilled agriculture, Forestry and fishery workers" was the most common occupation which was held by almost 31 percent of people aged 15-64 years in 2016 (about 34 percent for women and 28 percent for men) [5, p.58]. (See Figure 4).

Figure 4: Employed population age (15-64 years) by main occupation and sex, 2016 (%)



Source: NIS, Cambodia Socio-Economic Survey, 2016

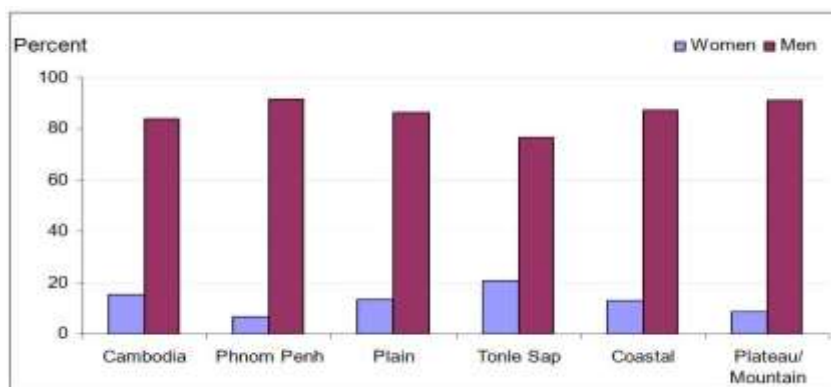
3.2. Gender profile of households and Land ownership:

In 2008, there were 2.2million agriculture households in Cambodia, about 85 percent of all households in the country [10]. Of these, 20 percent (412,510) were female-headed and 80 percent (1,618,588) were male-headed[17]. Women who are the household heads are more

likely to work in agriculture than men who are the head of the households. Some of the women who lead households are widows (often from civil violence or because they were younger than their husband), divorced, or have been abandoned by their husband. Normally they were identified as the poorest and vulnerable households among the community, especially widows with young children and no adult laborers within their family. Households headed by women have a higher rate of child labor than other households, this is especially true for girls in households headed by women; they perform work far more often than other children. About 60 percent of girls and 48 percent of boys from women-headed households worked, compared with 43 percent of girls and 34 percent of boys in male-headed households. Moreover, households headed by women who work in agriculture are more vulnerable than men headed households, mostly due to lack of land ownership. For instance, women-headed households often own smaller lots land than man (1.1hectars of land on average compared to 1.5 hectares for households headed by men[22]) and are more vulnerable to losing their land in the event of economic shocks[23].

The 2010 census reported that about 25 percent of households are headed by women in the country, yet only 15 percent (485,000 hectares) of agriculture land was owned by them [24]. (See Figure 5 for more details)

Figure 5: Agriculture land by Sex of household head by zone, 2010 (%)



Source: (NIS), Ministry of Planning, 2012

In 2016, women-headed household represented 22 percent of households, but these households owned only 12.4 percent (418,000 hectares) of the total 3,359,000 hectares of agricultural land in Cambodia. Women-headed households on average had 60-70 percent less land than households head by men [5, p.19].

The table below has shown the percentage and of total agriculture land owned by sex and zone and in every zone almost 70 percent that women-headed household owned less land

than men-headed household. For the figure 6 showed only percentage. (See Table 3 and Figure 6 for more details)

Table 3: Agriculture land owned by households by gender of household head and zone, 2016 (Thousands and %)

Zone	Women		Men		Both sexes
	Hectares	Percent	Hectares	Percent	
Cambodia	418	12.4	2,941	87.6	3,359
Phnom Penh	0	18.6	1.1	81.4	1.4
Plain	175	15.4	962	84.6	1,138
Tonle Sap	129	10.6	1,093	89.4	1,223
Coast	46	19.2	194	80.8	240
Plateau/Mountain	67	8.8	690	91.2	757

Source: NIS, Cambodia Socio-Economic survey, 2016

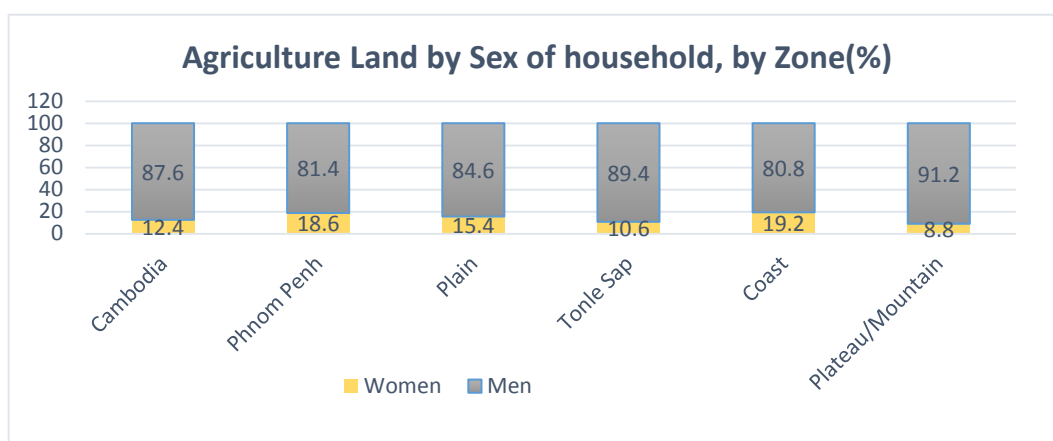


Figure 6: Agriculture land by Sex of household head by zone, 2016 (%)

Source: NIS, Cambodia Socio-Economic survey, 2016

4. The difficulties of Cambodian women in agriculture:

4.1. Productive Resources Access:

Sections 1 and 2 show that women play a large role in agriculture and that many women are involved in the agriculture sector. Consequently, it is critical to certify that women benefit as fully from their participation in the agriculture sector as men do. However, women do not seem receive equal benefits due to constrains in access. Women face difficulties when trying to access productive resources, assets, services, information and technologies, and the market [8].

4.1.1. Access to and control over land:

Land access

Women have found access to only about 20% of all land worldwide. Land and other productive resources are the significant elements of agricultural processing, which women need to use or own to assure their income and secure food security for their families. It is not only in Cambodia that women own land less than men, but also in Western, Central and North Africa and throughout the Middle East, less than 10% of women are land owners. Whereas in Eastern and Southern Africa, up to 30% of women held individual land titles. Despite this, there are only a few countries, such as Latvia and Lithuania, where women hold more than 45% of all land titles [25].

In Cambodia, according to the Agriculture census in 2013, 85% of total agriculture household have access to land, with an average area of agriculture land per agricultural household of 1.637 hectares. Of the households with access to land, the land is held by men in 73% (or 1.4 million) of the cases, while women only own 27% (or 0.5 million) of the land. For all households; about the ratio is 268 men land holders for every 100 women land holders. The different number of plots and land that they owned is also a matter of access to land; more than 61 percent of male-headed households have more than one plot, while this is only true for 51 percent of female-headed households [17].

Land Tenure

Due to lack of information about land rights and land title processes in the law, many women struggle to get land registered in their name. According to the “Chhap Srey” (Code of women), which is a traditional rule for Cambodian women, a wife should respect the husband’s decision-making and should be the subordinate of the husband. Consequently, land titles are mostly registered in the name of men. As a result, women are vulnerable to losing their land in case of a divorce, widowhood or their husband’s migration. In a recent report, more than 2.4 million land titles have been surveyed and registered, and more than 600,000 households have received the respective certificates. The report argued that gender equality policies have been successful as they found that more than 60% of land title are jointly registered to husband and wife, 19% exclusively to women, 8% exclusively to men, and the remaining 10% is land belong to companies or associations and public land. However, it can be questioned if the 60% of joint registrations are really a sign of gender equality, as 25% of women headed households still

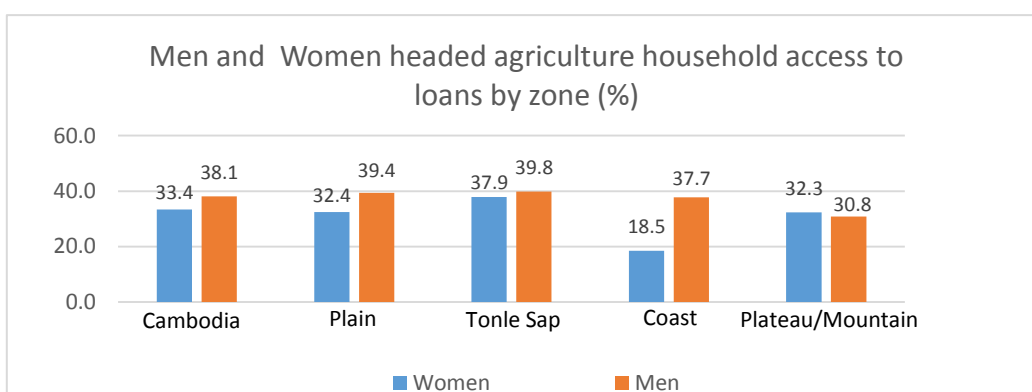
have registered together with their missing husband, this may cause issues in case of transactions because the law demands both sides sign an agreement [25, 26].

4.1.2. Credit access:

Access to credit is important for agriculture households, especially for women to build and enhance their economic capacity, improve their agricultural production and to increase the price of their product in multiple ways [17]. However, some women-headed house are often small land holders and lack access to credit due to lack of education of credit processing, and the size of land (as the land is often used as collateral, and banks demand a sizeable plot before a loan is granted). In Cambodia, only 37 percent of total agriculture households, with men-headed households having more access; 38.1 percent of men-headed households had access to loans while only 33.4 percent of women-headed households did. When comparing loans that were granted, the gender ratio was 1:5, meaning that only 1 women was given a loan for every five men that got a loan [11, 17, 23].

The figure below has shown that the Tonle Sap zone has the highest percentage of loans by all households, even women-head households in this zone have a more loans that the other three zones. Furthermore, the percentage of men-headed households that had access to loans is higher than the percentage of women-headed households in all zones except the Plateau/Mountain zone. (See Figure 7)

Figure 7: Men and Women-headed household access to loans by zone (% of households)



Sources: FAO, National gender profile of agriculture household, 2010

MAFF, Gender mainstreaming policy in agriculture, 2015

ADB, A fair share of women, 2004

There are many sources of access to credit, yet banks are the most frequently used source as 9.1 percent all agriculture households have used a bank to get a loan, and followed by NGOs (8.7 percent of households used an NGO), and Moneylenders (7.7 percent of households). Men

headed households mostly requested loans from banks and non-government organizations (NGOs) for the purpose of “Agriculture production, operation and Implementation”, while women headed household tended to borrow from moneylenders more than from other sources and commonly used loans for “Household consumption need”[11].

4.2. Agriculture Extension Service access:

Agriculture extension services are government services that provide agriculture skill training on the topics of new technology and techniques, in order to strengthening the ability of farmers and to enhance agricultural production.

In rural areas only 1 percent of total farmers had access to extension services in 2007 (compared to 0.7 percent in 2002 [23]), and of that 1 percent of beneficiaries only 10 percent were women [27]. This is due to many factors that constrain women from participating such as the burden of household work, childcare and food preparation, security and transportation from local areas to the extension service offices, the information of the service being mostly passed to men who are the household head, and the limitation of women’s education (Illiteracy is still higher among women). Mostly, the service offices are located in districts at about 9 to 13 kilometer from their village, so it hard for women to participate in agriculture extension services [17]. Despite this, in 2013 of a statistical report affirmed that 27 percent of total agriculture households had access to extension service provided by the government [14]. Additionally, Cambodia has recently outlined its progress of achieving CEDAW articles 1 to 16 in the “sixth periodic report submitted by Cambodia under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2017”. When discussing article 14 (rural women), the report states that women represented 41 percent of 1,138 commune extension workers and nine percent of 9,276 village extension workers in 2016. This means that the number of women who accessed agricultural extension service increased[28].

4.2.1. Information and communication Technologies:

Information and communication technologies refers to all the devices, network equipment and application such as phones, radios, computer, televisions, and satellites and so on, which are all the sensing tools for people access to the internet and receive information at a distance [29]. In Cambodia, television and radio are the most common mediums which both men and women-headed households owned. The primary accessory is television as 58.9 percent of men-headed household owned a television while 44 percent of women-headed households owned

one. However, even though television is more frequently owned by both men and women-headed households, most of new information related to agricultural technique was received from radios. At least 2 out of 5 women-headed household owned a radio. Furthermore, women-headed households had less access to video players and cellphones than households headed by men, only 15 percent of households headed by women owed a cellphone compared to 27 percent of households headed by men[11]. Land line telephones, satellite dishes and computers were rarely used due to the price, cost of electricity and lack of communication lines for telephones.

4.2.2. Technology and Farm Equipment:

Nowadays, farmers are able to use agriculture mechanization in order to reduce their workload, save time, and increase agricultural production. However, all those machines seem to be unaffordable for women farmers. Therefore, agriculture mechanization also causes a gap between men and women-headed households in accessing to technology and farm equipment because households headed by women have less access to farm equipment and tools, than men-headed households. A higher proportion of households headed by (48% compared to 31% for women headed households) use ploughs. In addition, men-headed households are seven times more likely to have access to hand tractors and more than twice as likely to have to access a water pump. Moreover, households headed by women are less likely to use threshing machines and rice mills than households headed by men. For women-headed households, only 0.2 percent used threshing machines and 1 percent use rice mills, whereas 1.3 percent of house hold head by men used threshing machine and 3.7 percent used rice mills [9, 17].

4.3. Markets access:

Besides supplying food for farmer's daily life, agriculture products also can be sold at the market which is a stream of revenue for Cambodian farmers, both men and women. However, women still face more constrains than men when accessing the market, in part because of women's constrains in the aforementioned areas; information and communication technology can help get information about the market, training and new technology can help women access the market, etc. [30]. In other words, market access might improve already if the other areas improve. On remaining challenge that has not been mentioned above is that women find it hard to secure save transport to and from the market.

5. International conventions:

With the such a high percentage of women employed in the agriculture sector, caring about how well they can access to agricultural resources and services is of great importance to the royal government of Cambodia. Because of this, Cambodia has ratified two international conventions which are both relevant to protecting the rights of rural women.

International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

ICESCR is a part of the International Bill of Human Rights and provides citizens in each party state the right to an adequate standard of living, housing, education, labor, social security, health, culture (language and religion), and self-determination [31, 32]. Cambodia ratified the ICESCR on 26 August 1992, and articles 31, 36, 65, 72, 75 of Cambodia's constitution are all linked with ICESCR's articles [33, p.7, 34]. Article 3 of ICESCR states that men and women have equal rights in economic, social and cultural spheres [33, p.11, 35], while the Article 11 (para.1) mentions the right to adequate food and a standard living [33, p.14, 35]. Implementing these two articles would mean giving women equal rights with men when it comes to owning, using and controlling property, land, housing, and having access to resources [35].

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Cambodia ratified CEDAW on 15 October 1992 [36]. CEDAW emphasizes the rights of rural women in Article 14. Especially paragraph 2, sub d and sub g are important for this paper as these sections state parties are in charge of making sure that rural women have equal rights to participate and equally benefit from rural development. This means states are responsible for ensuring that women have the right to acquire training and education, benefit from all community and extension services, and have access to agricultural credit, marketing facilities, and appropriate technology[37].

6. Gender-Responsive Policies and Programs in Cambodia

6.1. Gender Mainstreaming in Agriculture

Recognizing that women are an important resource in the agriculture sector, the royal government of Cambodia acknowledged that gender issues need to be further addressed in order to improve gender equality and promote women's empowerment. In according with the Rectangular Strategy Phase (RSP), National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), Cambodia Gender Strategic Plan (CGSP), and Agriculture Sector Strategy Development Plan (ASDP), which are all the main mechanisms that address gender issue in their objectives, the Ministry of

Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) has set up a Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategic framework in Agriculture (2016-2020) which links each objective of the above mechanisms Based on MAFF Gender Mainstreaming Policy and Strategic Framework in Agriculture (2016-2020), there are three objectives to be achieved by 2020:

- “1. To promote women’s economic empowerment through women’s access to goods and service for agricultural development and markets
2. To strengthen capacities, resources and commitment within MAFF to ensure effective mainstreaming of gender perspectives into the agriculture sector
3. To increase women’s and men’s equal representation and participation in agriculture sector.” [17]

6.2. Agricultural Extension Policy in Cambodia

Agriculture extension began in Cambodia since 1957, the purpose is educating and sharing new technology and innovations in agriculture with farmers and farming communities in order to enhance and expend their productivity and commercialization.

In part 4.6. of the document entitled ‘Mainstreaming Cross-cutting Issues in Agricultural Extension Services’, (section 4, point 32) it is stated that women are very important for agriculture and the processes after harvesting. The policy aims to work on gender issues by:

- “Recruiting and training female extension workers.
- Developing gender-sensitive technologies.
- Conducting local needs assessments.
- Developing programs to address local needs.
- Collecting gender-and age-disaggregated data.
- Monitoring gender targets
- Mainstreaming gender issues during in-service training and within training institutions’ curricula.” [38]

6.3. Women Farmers Champions (Joint Project)

There is a joint project run by Gender and Child Protection Unit of Ministry of Agriculture Forest and Fisheries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Oxfam’s partners, called ‘Women Farmers Champion.’ This project has two bodies; a Women Farmers Champion’s profile book and a forum at two levels (National and Sub-national level).

The Women Farmer Champion Book consist of 100 women farmer short biographies, which show their roles and participation in agriculture. In particular, it shares their opinions about and experiences of practicing agriculture.

The Women Farmers Champion project was created to eliminate negative attitudes about the role women play in agriculture and also to allow women farmers to communicate, discuss, and exchange about their farming skills and difficulties. According to this network, the project can assist online women farmers to share good practicing with each other and also to facilitate finding solutions to difficulties in the agriculture sector. The Sub-national level forum comprises of 521 women farmers from all the provinces, who came from 5 different zones (Mekong River region, southern and northern Tonle Sap region, lowland region, and coastal region), divided into groups; each group needed to choose a representative to send to the National Level forum. Moreover, 20 participation of each region were selected to join the National forum [39, 40].

7. Conclusion

Since the vast majority of rural women are engaged in the agriculture sector, around 40% to 60% during 2007 to 2016, even though their participation seem slowly declined, but women still play a critical role in a big sharing economic growth, Agricultural productive and development, food supply, and poverty reduction. In their daily life, women not only act as a housewife who responsible for all the household burden but they also responsible for farming activities, raising livestock and also sell all those agricultural production at the market. However, the ability of accessing to and owning productive resource, asset and service to improve their agriculture production seem still lower than men in many areas such as accessing to Land, accessing to credit, information and communication technology, farm equipment, and accessing to market which are the constraint for rural women economic empowerment. On the other hand, based on a new report of Cambodia's Land registration authority, land titles are often registered to women, but most land is jointly registered between husband and wife. The report revealed that during government policy implementation, women's rights within family are recognized. Unfortunately, 25% of women-headed household still registered land to their missing husband which is a problem for transactions. However, an achievement of government policy is that more women became extension service workers, 41% of workers at the commune level were women, but at the village level the percentage was still low (9%). In accordance with the vision of Royal government of Cambodia on gender issues in agriculture sector, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Women Affairs have worked with line

ministries and other stakeholder and donors to create a 'Gender mainstreaming policy' to mainstream gender perspectives in agriculture, promote women participation among their community and improve their agriculture livelihoods in rural areas. In addition, Agricultural Extension policy is cover the extension service to recruit and provide more training skills and techniques for women farmers and women extension service workers, to address local needs and create more programs to answer to the needs, mainstream gender in the progress of service and follow up the gender targets. Nevertheless, this service still face many difficulties such as funds, materials and human resources due to the weak of supporting system and regulation.

Other than the policies mentioned, there is the "Women Farmers Champion" project which gathered women farmers from 5 zones to share their experiences, difficulties and learn good practicing from each other in agricultural work. It is a good project that seems to have yielded good result, but part of the project is about online women farmers, whereas this research showed that not many women farmers have access to internet, so this could be a consideration for future implementation of the project.

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