

Gender Analysis of “Mainstreaming Agro-Biodiversity Conservation in to Agricultural Production Systems of Ethiopia” Institute of Biodiversity Conservation (IBC) Project

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Introduction

Agriculture has been playing a critical role in the economy of many developing countries of the world (Economicsdiscussion.net 2015), including Ethiopia. In this economic activity, both men and women have been involved with their distinct ascribed roles and responsibilities such as food production, agricultural bio-diversity management and conservation. With regard to women’s participation, in Sub-Saharan Africa, studies have shown that they share in the agricultural labor force took 50 percent (FAO, 2011). According to FAO (2005), women’s share in the production of food has reached 80, 60 and 40 percent in Africa, Asia and Latin America, respectively.

However, the differential role and responsibility assignments of women and men in agricultural sector left the former in disadvantageous positions. In most societies of the world, women’s contribution in the sector is underestimated and undervalued. Women have also suffered from lack of access to and control over resources. Women are underrepresented in leadership and decision making positions at household as well as society level. Furthermore, the arduous domestic chores like food processing, collecting firewood and water and so on are overwhelmingly performed by women. The work performed by women on being unpaid and invisible and make women overburdened as compared to male counterparts (Nakkiran and Karunakaran 2009).

The study focused on the analysis of gender relations in division of labor, resource ownership, leadership and decision making at household and societal levels in the Project implemented by the Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute (EBI) Project known as “Ethiopia: Mainstreaming Agro-biodiversity Conservation into the Farming Systems of Ethiopia.” The objective of the project is to provide farming communities with incentives (policies, capacity, markets, and knowledge) to mainstream conservation of agro-biodiversity, including crop wild relatives into the farming system of Ethiopia. The project is implemented in the three regional states of Ethiopia such as the Amhara (Menjar-Shenkora *Woreda*), Oromia (Yayu and Gimbichu *Woredas*) as well as the Southern Nations and Nationalities Regional State (Angacha *Woreda*).

Objectives

1. To identify the roles and responsibilities of women and men in agricultural activities,
2. To explore decision-making roles of women and men in access to and control over resources at household level,
3. To find out the leadership and decision making statuses of women at household and community levels.
4. To assess general challenges and opportunities of women have been facing in the project sites, and
5. To recommend possible solutions for the identified challenges.

Methodology

The analysis has both quantitative and qualitative in nature. So, primary and secondary data sources were used. Primary data mainly the quantitative one was collected through a survey questionnaire which is prepared based on the tool known as the Harvard Analytical Framework (HAF). In order to supplement the data that are obtained by HAF, semi-structured interviewing of key informants, focus group discussion and field observation was employed. Both female and male farmers (beneficiaries), experts on the project sites, development agents, women’s affairs officials, EBI project coordinators of each site and others were taking part in interviews and focus group discussion. Secondary sources of the study are obtained through assessing various scholarly works in the area, reports, project documents, magazines, plans, books, articles, women’s legal and policy instruments and the like.

Study Findings and Discussions

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, the practices of gender division of labor in productive, reproductive and community tasks as well as the opportunities that both women and men have in accessing to and controlling over resources are discussed in this chapter. The chapter has also included the challenges that women have been facing in division of labor, access to and control over resources, and their participation in the management and conservation of biodiversity. The following section presents the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents such as sex, age, family size, marital status and the like.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by their Socio-demographic characteristics

Characteristics	Woreda									
	Minjar		Yayu		Gimbichu		Angacha		Overall Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Gender										
Male	35	70	30	65.2	27	67.5	42	66.7	134	67.3
Female	15	30	16	34.8	13	32.5	21	33.3	65	32.7
Total	50	-	46	-	40	-	63	-	199	-
Age										
15-29	13	26	3	6.5	7	17.5	14	22.2	37	18.6
30-44	18	36	22	47.8	18	45	20	31.7	78	39.2
45-59	16	32	14	30.4	14	35	23	36.6	67	33.7
60 and above	3	6	7	15.2	1	2.5	6	9.5	17	8.5
Total	50	-	46	-	40	-	63	-	199	-
Family Size										
1-4	26	52	14	30.4	12	30	13	20.6	65	32.6
5-8	21	42	27	58.7	24	60	33	52.4	105	52.8
9-12	3	6	5	10.9	3	7.5	17	27	28	14.1
More than 12	-	-	-	-	1	2.5	-	-	1	0.5
Total	50	-	46	-	40	-	63	-	199	-
Level of Education										
Cannot read and write	20	40	8	17.5	17	42.5	13	20.6	58	29.1
Can read and write only	15	30	7	15.6	11	27.5	7	11.1	40	20.1
Primary School (1-8)	12	24	26	56.5	11	27.5	33	52.4	82	41.2
Secondary School (9-10)	1	2	3	6.7	1	2.5	8	12.7	13	6.5
Preparatory (11-12)	-	-	1	2.2	-	-	2	3.1	3	1.5
Others	2	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1.0
Total	50	-	45	-	40	-	63	-	199	-
Marital Status										
Married	37	74	39	84.8	33	82.5	51	81	160	80.4
Divorced/Separated	2	4	4	8.7	2	5	-	-	8	4.0
Widowed	4	8	2	4.3	4	10	6	9.5	16	8.0
Unmarried	7	14	1	2.2	1	2.5	6	9.5	15	7.5
Total	50	-	46	-	40	-	63	-	199	-
Religion										
Orthodox	50	100	20	43.5	40	100	11	17.7	121	61.1
Muslim	-	-	19	41.7	-	-	-	-	19	9.6
Protestant	-	-	7	15.2	-	-	51	82.3	58	28.3
Total	50	-	46	-	40	-	62	-	198	-
Ethnic Group										
Oromo	0	-	30	75	31	67.4	-	-	61	30.6
Amhara	50	-	10	25	15	32.6	-	-	75	37.7
Kambatta	-	-	-	-	-	-	63	100	63	31.7
Total	50	-	40	-	46	-	63	-	199	-
Livelihood										
Farming	50	100	45	98	3	7.1	3	2.5	101	52.6
Mixed	-	-	1	2	36	85.8	51	97.5	88	45.8
Raring of animals	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0	0
Petty trade	-	-	-	-	3	7.1	0	0	3	1.6
Total	50	-	46	-	42	-	54	-	192	-

As shown in Table 1, in all study areas, from the total of 199 households (HH) respondents, women took 32.7 percent. The sex disaggregated data of each site show that men comprise the highest number. With the exception of Angacha, the majority of the respondents in all study areas belong to the age group of 30-44 percent. In Angacha, the majority that is 36.6 percent of respondents was between the age of 45 to 59. With regard to household respondents who are 60 and above, the highest is found in Yayu (15.2 percent) and the lowest in

Gimbichu (2.5 percent). From this data it is possible to understand that most of the farmers falling in the 30-44 years age group and still 60 and above households are engaged in agricultural activities. According to a research done by Brooks et al. (2013), the more farmers are younger and the more productive they are. This is because young people are more likely energetic, creative and stronger than the elderly ones.

The distribution of respondents by family size revealed that majority of households lie between 5 and 8 with 58.7, 60 and 52.4 in Yayo, Gimbichu and Angacha, respectively. 52 percent and the majority of the family size of households in Menjar-Shenkora belong to 1-4 and it is smaller than the other study sites. Significant percentage of respondents (28 percent) in Angacha has 9-12 family size. The existence of the dominant family size of households between 5 and 8 coincided with the 2011 CSA's Demographic and Health Survey. It has shown that the average household size of rural people in Ethiopia is 5.1 (CSA 2012). It is clear that family size has direct relation with women's burden at household level. When the number of family members increases women's burden also increase, which means women are often obliged to carry out a large number of reproductive tasks, in addition to their productive ones. Having a large size of family members has also additional burden for women in assuring food availability for the household. Moreover, most times when families have a large number of members and have financial constraint, then they prefer to send their boy children to school rather than girls. According to UNESCO

“When faced with economic hardship, a great number of parents, even those aware of the importance of girls' education, are forced to educate boys at the expense of girls. It is still argued that the man is the "bread winner" and hence boys need more education than girls who will get married and will have a man take care of them”

Finding of the study about educational level has shown that the majority of respondents in Yayo and Angacha have the primary level of education and its figure is represented as 56.5 and 52.4, respectively. The percentage of illiterates (those who cannot read and write) in Menjar-Shenkora and Gimbichu constitute 40 and 42.5 percent, respectively. This finding is strengthened by CSA (2014) as the majority of rural people in Ethiopia “have little or no education”. The sex disaggregated data on educational level also shows that females are less likely educated than males. This finding is further strengthened by Cheong (2014) as “women living in rural areas often have lower levels of education than the men, as is common in developing countries.” The low level of their education hinders women from engaging of new technologies and extension services. As mentioned above, large family size and household chores in which girls are responsible for some of the reasons for low level of women's educations as compared to men.

The most common marital status of respondents in all study sites was married. Almost in all *Woredas*, the majority of households are headed by men. In Angacha, a significant percentage (34) of the respondents is headed by females. This implies that the societies of the study areas are dominantly headed by males.

As mentioned before, gender division of labor refers to the assignment of a particular task or activity either to males or females both in urban and rural contexts. The segregated tasks that are assigned to males and females are generally categorized into productive, reproductive and community roles. However, the division of labor is contextual in a sense that certain tasks that can be performed by a woman in a particular area or cultural group of people cannot be performed by men and vice versa (Glopp, 2008). The case of the study sites is not unique in this regard. Under this section questions like who is doing what, who shoulder the highest burden, and what are the implications of the division of labor are addressed in detail as follows.

Productive role involves the production of goods and services with an exchange of value or generate income either in kind or in cash. In a rural community context, productive role refers to involving in either in the production of food or rearing of animals or both. Both men and women are involved in the productive activities, even though the types of activities they are engaged in and the magnitude of their participation varies from one area to the other.

In all study areas, farmers are exercising mixed farming. This section presents the division of labor between men/boys and women/ girls in the agricultural activities such as production of crops and animal husbandry.

Teff is the main crop which is produced by farmers in Menjar-Shenkora. In pre-harvesting, harvesting and post-harvesting activities, men are highly involved in land preparation, plowing, applying fertilizer, threshing, transporting of agricultural products from farm to the residential areas and construction of storage as compared to women. On the other hand, applying manure and seed selection is dominantly undertaken by women. Also considerable percentages of women are involved in digging, weeding, construction of storage, even though men predominate in these activities. Both boys and girls in this area undertake weeding. The boys have also taken a part in plowing and land preparation, but not for girls.

The main crop produced in Gimbichu is Durum wheat. Both men and women are involved in almost all pre-harvesting, harvesting and post-harvesting activities. Similar to Menjar-Shenkora, land preparation and plowing in Gimbichu is predominantly undertaken by men and followed by boys. As the figure shows negligible percentage of women and daughters took part in plowing. The women took the highest percentage in weeding and applying manure. Both men and women are involved equally in the monitoring of the storing of wheat in

Durum Gimbichu.

Since coffee is the main cash crop produced in the area, the activities undertaken in Yayu are quite different from Menjar-Shenkora and Gimbichu. Women have a role almost in all coffee production activities, though the percentage of men predominate. The activities which are dominantly performed by women include harvesting and transporting of coffee.

The finding of the study reveals that production of enset (false banana), vegetables, spices and medicinal plants are peculiar livelihoods of the people of Angacha. In Angacha, applying manure on enset and vegetables, weeding of spices and medicinal plants, harvesting of (enset, vegetables, spices and medicinal plants), transporting and conserving of enset are mainly undertaken by women. According to informants and discussants in Angacha, except planting, managing and marketing of enset, the rest of activities are solely performed by women. Activities undertaken by men on the other hand, involve in land preparation, plowing, planting of enset and medicinal plants, applying of fertilizers and the like. As compared to the other study areas, women's involvement in plowing is over 10 percent in Angacha.

Here, from the productive roles in all study areas, it is possible to understand that both men and women are involved in productive activities though there is a clear division of labor among them. However, the activities performed by men and women vary from one study area to the other and from activity to activity within one study area. In all study areas the involvement of women in plowing is almost non-existent except Angacha where a considerable percentage of women involve in plowing. An informant from Gimbichu stated that women are involved in all farming activities except plowing. Different studies have shown that many people around the world, including Ethiopians perceive that an agricultural activity mainly plowing is considered as the realm of men. There are different justifications for this. One of the justifications is a perception that it is a taboo for female farmers to plow and plowing demands physical strength to those women lack it as compared to men on the other side (Nakkiran, Karthikeyan and Karunakaran 2009).

This is one reason why most developing countries, including Ethiopia consider women as co-farmers instead of active players in the area (Nakkiran, Karthikeyan and Karunakaran 2009). As informants described, among women, especially the married ones are more likely taken as assistances of their husbands as compared to the widowed and unmarried in agricultural activities. On the other hand, weeding and applying manure is predominantly done by women. Therefore, the result of the study in regard to a productive role concurs with the studies of UNW (2015), Nakkiran, Karthikeyan and Karunakaran (2009) and Rubin (2004). As Rubin (2004) Beneria (2001) noted in the agricultural activities of most developing countries, women are more likely involved in subsistence crop and vegetable production as compared to men. As Wikipedia (2014) noted the reason why women engaged in subsistence farming is mainly "to provide food to fulfill the needs of the members of household."

Informants and discussants of all study areas confirmed that "during peak seasons of labor demand mainly in times of weeding, seed sowing and harvesting women are actively involved in helping men in addition to their household (indoor) tiresome and thankless works". To alleviate the shortage of workforce, especially during peak seasons of labor demand, men on the farm are helped by adult men in the form of 'debo' in Angacha and Yayu and 'jigie' in Gimbichu and Menjar-Shenkora as well as hiring day laborers are commonly used practice as way out the temporary problem. Here it is possible to conclude that men have a possibility of getting someone to assist them either by hiring or helping each other but it does not work for women.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by their role in animal husbandry

	MenjarnaShenkora				Yayu				Gimbichu				Angacha			
	Women Freq(%)	Daughters Freq(%)	Men Freq(%)	Sons Freq(%)	Women Freq(%)	Daughters Freq(%)	Men Freq(%)	Sons Freq(%)	Women Freq(%)	Daughters Freq(%)	Men Freq(%)	Sons Freq(%)	Women Freq(%)	Daughters Freq(%)	Men Freq(%)	Sons Freq(%)
Herding of Livestock	10 (14.5)	3 (4.3)	46 (66.7)	10 (14.5)	4 (10.5)	3 (8.1)	15 (40.5)	15 (40.5)	29 (31.5)	15 (16.1)	20 (21.5)	29 (31.2)	42 (40.4)	4 (3.8)	48 (46.8)	10 (9.6)
Cattle feed collection	16 (22.5)	1 (1.4)	44 (62)	10 (14.1)	22 (52.4)	2 (4.8)	11 (26.2)	7 (16.7)	25 (28.4)	14 (15.9)	22 (25)	27 (30.7)	30 (40.5)	3 (4.1)	31 (41.9)	10 (13.5)
Sanitation & milking	30 (45.5)	4 (6.1)	31 (47)	1 (1.5)	23 (67.6)	5 (14.7)	6 (17.6)	-	37 (63.8)	14 (24.1)	3 (5.2)	4 (6.9)	60 (72.3)	5 (6)	15 (18.1)	3 (3.6)
Health care	10 (17.2)	5 (8.6)	42 (72.4)	1 (1.7)	9 (26.5)	1 (2.9)	21 (61.8)	3 (8.5)	28 (45.9)	5 (8.2)	15 (24.5)	13 (21.3)	19 (31.1)	-	38 (62.3)	4 (6.6)
Cattle fattening	-	-	42 (60)	28 (40.0)	2 (28.6)	2 (28.6)	3 (42.8)	-	38 (42.2)	14 (15.6)	20 (22.2)	18 (20)	40 (32)	30 (24)	51 (40.8)	4 (3.2)

Animal husbandry is the other productive agricultural activity in which both men, women, daughters and sons have part, although the degree of their participation varies according to a specific type of activity. Accordingly, as shown in the above table, except Gimbiichu, in the rest of study site, livestock herding is dominantly performed by men although women have a significant role. Regarding sanitation and milking in all study areas, women took the majority percentage, whereas a cattle fattening is dominantly undertaken by men.

But the figure of the above table also has shown that considerable percentages of women, 20 percent of women with Gimbichu and 40 percent of women in Angacha have a role in cattle fattening. A study by Dorothy and Edokat (2012) noted that women usually provide most of the labor for stall-fed dairy cattle and other animals kept near the home.

According to informants, there are two reasons why cattle fattening dominated by men. The first one is since the economic return of the activity is immediate, involving in this activity help men to control over the money which will be obtained by selling the fattened cattle. The second opinion of informants is that cattle fattening requires physical strength which women lack it.

Keeping the health of livestock is dominantly performed by men with the exception of Gimbichu. Almost in all animal husbandry activities and in all study sites girls and boys have also responsibility parts. In cattle feed collection, in Yayu and Angacha the percentage of women involved in the cattle feed collection took the majority that is, 52.4 and 40.5 respectively.

Beside the above activities, informants were asked to list the types of activities in which women are involved in animal husbandry. Accordingly, women are also responsible to prepare animal fodder, taking care of calves/small ruminants, rearing of chicken for meat, eggs and/or sell, and so on. On the men's side, informants have listed that beekeeping in Angacha is the duty of men in addition to the above responsibilities.

The gender dimensions of rearing of livestock in developing countries are further strengthened by Nakkiran, Karthikeyan and Karunakaran (2009:32) as " In many parts of developing countries, women are equally involved with men in livestock raising which is another form of agricultural activity. In fact, women assume additional work of making butter and preparing the dung of fuel as these activities are taken as part of house work on the other hand, their labor in livestock raising has an indirect contribution to farming through manuring."

However, the benefits and recognition that women are getting from animal husbandry is minimal as compared with their effort exerted in the process (Dorothy and Edokat 2012;). Thus, the gender division of labor in agricultural activities such as crop production and animal husbandry implies that although women have been playing a significant role in cereal crop and livestock production, their contribution is less likely recognized, valued and they are considered as assistants of their men counter parts.

Reproductive roles are domestic activities that are mostly done by women. It involves not only biological reproduction but also the care and maintenance of the work force (male partner and working children) and the future work force (infants and school-going children) which are required to guarantee the maintenance and reproduction of the labor force. The reproductive role includes house work like cleaning, cooking, childbearing, rearing and caring for family members and the like.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Reproductive Role

Activities	Woreda															
	Menjarna-Shenkora				Yayu				Gimbichu				Angacha			
	Women Freq.(%)	Daughters Freq.(%)	Men Freq.(%)	Sons Freq.(%)	Women Freq.(%)	Daughters Freq.(%)	Men Freq.(%)	Sons Freq.(%)	Women Freq.(%)	Daughters Freq.(%)	Men Freq.(%)	Sons Freq.(%)	Women Freq.(%)	Daughters Freq.(%)	Men Freq.(%)	Sons Freq.(%)
Food processing and preparation	50 (96.2)	2 (3.8)	-	-	43 (67.2)	21 (32.8)	-	-	40 (72.7)	13 (23.6)	2 (3.6)	-	62 (77.5)	18 (22.5)	-	-
Taking care of children	50 (96.2)	2 (3.8)	-	-	38 (73.1)	5 (9.6)	8 (5.4)	1 (1.9)	37 (82.2)	8 (17.7)	-	-	60 (77.9)	15 (19.5)	1 (1.3)	1 (1.3)
Taking Care of elders and/or the sick	50 (100)	-	-	-	53 (64.3)	-	9 (5.7)	-	16 (66.7)	8 (33.3)	-	-	42 (72.4)	5 (8.5)	10 (17.2)	1 (1.7)
Fetching Water	-	-	50 (100)	-	32 (35.6)	26 (28.8)	10 (11.1)	16 (66.7)	27 (76.3)	18 (45.8)	14 (23.7)	-	42 (60.9)	25 (36.2)	-	2 (2.9)
Collecting firewood	-	-	50 (100)	-	38 (41.8)	24 (26.4)	17 (18.7)	16 (17.6)	39 (52)	19 (25.3)	17 (22.7)	-	24 (25.8)	15 (16.2)	27 (29)	27 (29)
Washing of clothes	50 (100)	-	-	-	31 (40.3)	27 (35.1)	56.5	14 (18.2)	38 (49.4)	20 (25.9)	9 (11.7)	-	48 (53.3)	34 (37.8)	3 (3.3)	5 (5.6)
Cleaning home and its compounds	50 (100)	-	-	-	29 (34.1)	24 (28.2)	6 (7.1)	26 (30.6)	40 (64.5)	18 (29)	4(6.6)	-	47 (52.2)	39 (43.3)	1 (1.1)	3 (3.3)
Building and maintaining shelter/huts	-	-	50 (100)	-	7 (12)	1 (1.8)	38 (70.4)	8 (14.8)	23 (35.9)	7 (10.9)	34 (54.8)	-	7 (9.9)	2 (2.8)	52 (73.2)	10 (14.1)
Serving food and drink	50 (100)	-	-	-	45 (66.2)	22 (32.4)	1 (1.4)	-	40 (61.5)	19 (29.2)	6 (9.2)	-	62 (72.1)	24 (27.9)	-	-

As presented in table 3, in all study sites food processing and preparation primarily carry out by women comprising 96.2, 67.2, 72.7 and 77.5 percent in Menjar-Shenkora, Yayu, Gimbichu and Angacha, respectively. Daughters took the remaining percentage. Conversely, men's and son's involvement is non-existent in food processing and preparation. It is clear that people residing in all study areas are diverse in their cultural identities. Thus, the type of staple food they are eating as well as food preparation and processing varies from one to the other study areas accordingly. In Angacha, for instance, the main staple food is mainly prepared from *Enset* in

the form of *bulla*, *kocho* and so on. So, food preparation from *enset* passes several stages and it is considered as labor and time intensive as compared to the preparation of food in other areas. Similarly, activities such as taking care of children is dominantly performed by women and followed by daughters in all study areas. The international scenario also shows that an estimated 66 percent of caregivers around the world are females. Although men also provide assistance especially in giving care for the sick and elderly, female caregivers may spend as much as 50 percent more time providing care than male caregivers (caregiver.org 2015). UNWomen.org(2015) further strengthened that the time spent by women to care as women devote 2 to 10 times the amount of time a day to care (for children, elderly, and the sick).

The assigned gender roles to fetch water and collect firewood have a different feature in study areas. In Menjar-Shenkora, for instance, fetching water and firewood collection is overwhelmingly carried out by men. In the rest of study areas fetching water and collecting firewood are dominantly performed by women. However, a considerable percentage of men in Yayu, Gimbichu and Angacha involve in fetching water and collecting of firewood. Still the gender difference has been exhibited in the way how men and women to fetch water, that is, the former use donkeys carry water but not for the vice versa. This implies that women are more likely involved in labor intensive activities which can expose them to different health complications as compared to men. Beth and Miller (2001:1) have noted the importance of “better access to water improve women’s health and income and liberates them from the daily drudgery of fetching water.” Informant and discussants confirmed that the reproductive tasks performed by women are not seasonal rather they are routine, time taking, labor intensive and tiresome. Women are expected to perform the productive and reproductive tasks at a time. Especially during peak weeding and harvesting times women are more likely overburdened and worked for longer hours than men. Girls mainly assist their mothers in many aspects like food preparation and processing, taking care of children, fetching water and collecting fire woods and so on as possible to see on the above table. Discussants in the FGD have described that daughters have a great share of fetching water by carrying heavy loads like pots and *jericans* (a liquid container) of water which are not balanced with their age and physical strength of girls.

This finding implies that reproductive tasks are the realms of women and followed by daughters. Informant further strengthened this idea as “reproductive tasks perceived as women’s exclusive role and thus there is a taboo for men to involve in such activities. If a man involved in domestic chores he will be insulted by the society, including women themselves by considering him as feminine.” From this, it is possible to conclude that women themselves accepted their ascribed reproductive role as their own territory.” Men’s involvement in fetching water, collecting of firewood, washing cloths and others which were traditionally considered as women’s task shows the dynamicity of gender relations across times. The activities which are dominantly performed by men in one cultural group of people, but not for the other also indicate the contextual nature of gender.

Community Role

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Community Role

Activities	Woreda															
	MenjarnaShenkora				Yayu				Gimbichu				Angacha			
	Women Freq.(%)	Daughters Freq.(%)	Men Freq.(%)	Sons Freq.(%)	Women Freq.(%)	Daughters Freq.(%)	Men Freq.(%)	Sons Freq.(%)	Women Freq.(%)	Daughters Freq.(%)	Men Freq.(%)	Sons Freq.(%)	Women Freq.(%)	Daughters Freq.(%)	Men Freq.(%)	Sons Freq.(%)
Participating in <i>Idir</i> in which both men and women are members	13 (34.2)		25 (65.8)	-	35 (53.0)	-	31 (47.0)	-	37 (52.9)	-	33 (47.1)	-	35 (50.0)	-	35 (50.0)	-
• As member																
• As leader	2 (8)	-	23 (98)	-	9 (36.0)	-	16 (64.0)	-	8 (36.4)	-	14 (63.6)	-	-	-	-	-
Participating in <i>Equibin</i> in which both men and women are members	7 (28)	-	18 (72)	-	4 (80.0)	-	1 (20.0)	-	16 (51.6)	-	15 (48.4)	-	26 (38.8)	3 (4.5)	34 (50.7)	4 (6.0)
• As member																
• As leader	2 (9.5)	-	21 (91.5)	-	-	-	-	-	2 (25.0)	-	6 (75.0)	-	2 (5.3)	-	33 (86.8)	3 (7.9)
Participating in cooperatives in which both men and women are members	6 (24)	-	19 (46)	-	1 (6.7)	-	14 (93.3)	-	20 (40.0)	-	30 (60.0)	-	17 (38.6)	-	26 (59.1)	1 (2.3)
• As member																
• As leader	-	-	8 (100)	-	5 (26.3)	-	14 (73.7)	-	4 (26.7)	-	11 (73.3)	-	4 (13.8)	-	24 (82.8)	1 (3.4)
Environmental conservation and terracing	-	-	11 (100)	-	1 (5.6)	-	-	17 (94.4)	9 (34.6)	-	17 (65.4)	-	3 (8.8)	-	23 (67.6)	8 (29.6)
As a coordinator																
Only labor service provision	50 (100)	-	50 (100)	-	24 (41.3)	-	34 (58.7)	-	20 (45.4)	-	24 (54.6)	-	12 (70.5)	5 (29.5)	-	-
Being an elder in cases, negotiating THE marriage to manage conflict and etc.	-	-	50 (100)	-	5 (13.9)	-	31 (86.1)	-	9 (25.0)	-	27 (75.0)	-	-	-	32 (97.0)	1 (3.0)

Both men and women do participate in different formal and informal social gatherings so as to protect and promote their wellbeing and common interests of societies in the study sites. *Senbete* (religious gathering), *idir* (literary mean social gathering that helps to help each other, especially when relatives of a member have passed away), *ikub* (literary mean traditional savings association), farmers' associations, environmental protection committees and so on are some of the examples of community gatherings in which both men and women have involved but in distinct tasks. Community role is also gendered just like the above productive and reproductive roles. Document analysis of the study areas has shown that, in many associations and cooperatives, both men and women are members in which the former exceeded in number than the later one. *Enset* products, marketing, cooperative association in Angacha, for instance, the number of men and women who are member took 279 and 135, respectively. Also, in Gimbichu, the number of men and women who are the member of Areda and its Surrounding Farmers' Varieties Conserving and Producing Cooperative is 316 and 18, respectively.

Table 4 shows that men are overrepresented in the leadership and decision making positions of in the above stated community gatherings whereas women are expected to perform the activities that are continual from the domestic chores like food preparation, serving the food, providing labor service and so on. With regard to the leadership role, men predominate in all community leadership roles like in politics, cooperatives, and environmental conservation activities, *idirs*, *ikubs* and the like. From the figure it is possible to conclude that the under representation women in community gatherings as members and leaders are pervasive almost in all study areas.

In Ethiopian tradition, *Shimgilinna* literary means (managing conflicts and concluding marriage by elders) is widely practiced in Ethiopian tradition for several years (Sisay, 2007). In *Shimgilinna*, elders have been playing an active role in managing conflicts as well as arranging/concluding marriage agreements and the likes. However, as informants stated most of the time women are excluded from such activities. (Nakkiran, Karthikeyan and Karunakaran 2009:24) has further strengthened this idea as "Ethiopian women are still underrepresented in leadership and decision making roles in community affairs. They are under represented in traditional structures. They hardly serve as elders or religious leaders in their community. Some of the reasons for depriving women from being represented in public spaces include pressure of their husbands not to participate in public spaces, lack of self-esteem and self-confidence on the women's side, the difficulty of balancing work and life, etc. However, informants and discussants confirmed that recently few widowed women began to participate as leaders although it is not sufficient. Even though their participation is minimal as compared to their men counterparts, mostly widowed women have been participating in environmental preservation including terracing, soil and water conservation.

The question was raised for discussants whether women have their own networks so as to share their common experience among themselves. Female group discussants from Gimbichu, for example, have mentioned that the most important occasions for women to share their experiences, worry and happiness are the way to fetch water, grinding mill, market as well as at coffee ceremony, and women's *idirs*. A study conducted by Deshmuch-Ranadive (2005) has indicated that other attributes such as ethnic background, religion, age, educational status of women and others have a significant role to deprive women from public space mainly from leadership and decision making activities in many countries of the world.

From the above data of division of labor, it is possible to conclude that the productive, reproductive and community roles are not equally distributed between men and women and thus it is unfair that favors the men folk. First, women's duties are routine and that are performed throughout the year, whereas men's duties are seasonal. According to discussants women are usually worked on an average of 18 hours of a day, especially from July to December. A research done by Messay (2012) has found out that as women in the rural areas of Ethiopia work over 15 hours of a day. In regard to the asymmetric gender division of labor and its trends for several years the Unwomen.org (2015) has indicated that "gender inequalities in time use are still large and persistent in all countries. When paid and unpaid work is combined, women in developing countries work more than men, with less time for education, leisure, political participation and self-care. Despite some improvements over the last 50 years, in virtually every country, men spend more time on leisure each day while women spend more time doing unpaid housework" As discussants further mentioned men have time to take rest when they are tired and have leisure time and they can go outside home for entertainment without getting permission from his wife but not the vice versa.

Even though they shoulder the highest burden, women accepted it as it is given to them by nature. Informants have been asked to mention whether the division of labor has an advantage or not. Most participants of the study have indicated that the division of labor left women in a disadvantageous position in the form of health, psychological, and economic negative impacts according to most discussants and key informants. Health wise feeling stress, Trachoma resulted from smoke are some of them. It has also contributed for their underrepresentation of women in leadership and decision making positions since the reproductive role hinder women to move outside their home. Economically, women especially the reproductive task prohibited them not to use their full potential in productive roles and not to have access to and control over resources; to be

dependent on their husbands economically. It deprived them from getting information from others in meetings, trainings and so on. The other negative side of the rigid division of labor when either a husband or a wife died or sick for a long period of time the family will suffer because of the inability of either sexes to accomplish the opposite sex duties due to the rigidity of division of labor.

Few informants and discussants argue that role division between men and women has its own positive side. Since they have enough experience to execute their respective roles for so many years, it is easy to accomplish their respective task effectively and efficiently.

On the other side, women themselves oppose the involvement of their husbands in domestic chores like baking *injera* (pan cake), mixing the powder of *teff* or wheat with water, boiling coffee and so on. The reason of the opposition is due to the accepted tradition of societies in the specific areas. If any male is found working in the household that the work culturally belongs to women, most of the time he is considered as feminine.

Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy, but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved. However, socialization and negative stereotyping of women and men, including stereotyping through the media, reinforces the tendency for political decision-making to remain the domain of men (UN Women, 1995).

Access to can be defined as the opportunity to make use of something/resources for a larger gain where as control refers to the power to choose and decide on how and for what purpose resources will be used (Forum.awid.org 2013). In other words, control over resources indicates what resources individuals can command to carry out their activities and the benefits that derive from them. Men and women have different roles and responsibilities o the household and societal levels so that they have different needs mainly so as to execute their given roles. In order to satisfy their respective needs, having access to and control over resources is very crucial. In an agricultural society like Ethiopia, there is inequality between men and women in access to and control over resources. This is also pervasive in the four study sites/areas.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by Access to and Control over Resources

Resources	Woreda															
	MenjamaShenkora				Yayu				Gimbichu				Angacha			
	Access to		Control over		Access to		Control over		Access to		Control over		Access to		Control over	
	Women Freq.(%)	Men Freq.(%)	Women Freq.(%)	Men Freq.(%)	Women Freq.(%)	Men Freq.(%)	Women Freq.(%)	Men Freq.(%)	Women Freq.(%)	Men Freq.(%)	Women Freq.(%)	Men Freq.(%)	Women Freq.(%)	Men Freq.(%)	Women Freq.(%)	Men Freq.(%)
Land	22 (44)	28 (56)	8 (16)	42 (80)	41 (47.2)	46 (52.8)	7 (19.4)	29 (70.6)	38 (48.7)	40 (51.3)	22 (39.3)	34 (60.7)	43 (44.3)	54 (55.7)	8 (12.9)	54 (87.1)
Agricultural inputs like farmers' varieties, improved seeds, Pesticides, fertilizers	11 (22)	39 (78)	5 (10)	45 (90)	36 (46.8)	41 (53.2)	6 (14.3)	36 (85.8)	21 (38.2)	34 (61.8)	13 (27.7)	34 (72.3)	17 (24.3)	53 (75.7)	7 (11.7)	53 (88.3)
Credit	7 (14)	43 (86)	2 (4)	48 (96)	29 (48.3)	31 (51.7)	11 (30.6)	25 (69.4)	14 (48.3)	15 (51.7)	9 (40.9)	13 (50.1)	18 (23.7)	58 (76.3)	9 (13.4)	58 (86.6)
Livestock																
Cattle	10 (28.5)	25 (71.4)	-	25 (100)	20 (44.4)	25 (55.6)	10 (33.3)	20 (66.7)	32 (46.4)	34 (51.5)	37 (53.6)	32 (48.5)	62 (47.5)	56 (47.5)	8 (12.5)	56 (87.5)
Sheep and/or goats	19 (38)	31 (62)	4 (11.4)	31 (88.5)	14 (38.9)	22 (61.1)	10 (47.6)	11 (52.4)	30 (45.4)	36 (54.5)	33 (52.4)	30 (47.6)	61 (50.0)	61 (50.0)	16 (24.2)	50 (75.8)
Donkeys	12 (32.4)	25 (67.6)	-	25 (100)	8 (50.0)	8 (50.0)	2 (20.0)	8 (80.0)	33 (45.8)	39 (54.2)	36 (52.2)	33 (47.8)	53 (37.8)	46 (37.8)	7 (23.3)	23 (76.7)
Mules/horses	-	13 (100)	-	13 (100)	-	-	-	-	1 (7.6)	12 (92.3)	-	12 (100)	38 (53.7)	43 (53.7)	7 (15.6)	38 (84.4)
Chicken	23 (57.5)	20 (46.5)	23 (76.8)	7 (23.3)	31 (47.8)	34 (52.3)	28 (59.6)	19 (41.4)	40 (74.1)	14 (25.9)	38 (88.4)	5 (11.6)	50 (43.2)	38 (43.2)	45 (59.2)	51 (40.8)
Camel	-	7	-	7 (100)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

In all study areas, men are more likely have access to and control over productive resources such as land, agricultural inputs (fertilizer, improved seeds, pesticides, etc.), agricultural extension services and credit than women. Above all, land is the most valuable resource that both women and men expected to have joint ownership at couples as per the 1997 Rural Land Administration of the Federal Government of Ethiopia and the 2005 Land Certification Program. According to the information obtained from the FGD, in practical terms,

however, there are conditions when women's access and control of land have been denied. Especially, at times of divorce and the death of their husbands women are forced to leave their land as well as their homes. Informants have also claimed that the tradition of the society and women's lack of awareness on their land right results in their confiscation.

The finding indicated that men and women in the study areas have unequal access to credit. Moreover, men are most of the time the decision makers on the amount and purpose of money that is going to be borrowed from credit and saving associations as well as micro finance institutions. To be women beneficial in equal terms, nowadays, the rural micro finance institutions obliged couples to sign on the credit agreement in front of officials. But, since most women cannot read and write they do not even know the exact amount of money which is written on the paper. So, there are husbands who cheat their wives by hiding the exact amount of money that they have borrowed. There are times when the amount of money written on paper exceeds that of women said to be borrowed. This is because of the intention of husbands to take the extra money for personal use.

With regard to access to and control over the livestock, men have the decisive role over the selling and buying of livestock such as cattle, camel, donkey, mule/camel and so on. A study of Beth Miller (2001) has noted that women benefit most when they have decision making authority about the small animals they manage, such as poultry rather than cattle, camel and so on. Cbd. int (2008) further strengthened the differences in the ownership of animals as men and women generally own different animal species: men tend to be responsible for cattle and larger animals and women for smaller animals, such as poultry.

Both men and women have decided to make power on the selling of cereals. But the amount of cereal to sell and the purpose/application of income obtained from the sells vary between men and women. Men are more likely wholesale than women. Most men who obtained money from selling of cereals and livestock tend to use for further investment like buying agricultural inputs, equipment/tools/, livestock, etc. Most women on the other hand, sell a small amount of cereals and poultry and the money is used for the daily consumption of family members including to buy clothes. FAO's 2013 study on gender equality and food security has also indicated that "when women have direct control over income, they tend to spend it on the well-being of the family, particularly on improving the nutritional security of the most vulnerable members." Informants were asked to identify the reason why the amount of cereals to be sold varies across gender. An informant from Yaya has claimed that "it is our tradition that allows selling large amount of crops such as coffee for the men and the opposite is true for women." As discussants have indicated there are men who waste money for personal satisfaction like for drinking and eating somewhere else in the town but not for the vice versa.

Nowadays, at household level, there is a little bit discussion between a husband and a wife on what to plant, to rent land, buy and sell etc. However, the husbands have the final say. Women, most of the time, are expected to execute what is decided by men. Most of the time, women's ideas cannot be taken into consideration while a decision is passed at family level. In matters of farming related issues, livestock, agricultural inputs and other men opt to discuss with other fellow men in the neighborhood instead of their wives. But there is a discussion and joint decision between husbands and wife's issues concerning household utensils, clothing and others. In Angacha, where polygamous marriage has been exercising, all of the wives of a husband are not informed equally on the issues that concern their lives particularly with regard to financial and other matters.

In all study areas respondents revealed that women have control over household utensils, milk and milk products, poultry and vegetables. In Angacha, in addition to the stated resources, women have the decision making power over spices as well as *enset* and its products like *bulla* and *Kocho*.

Men and women in the study area have unequal opportunities in getting agricultural extension services that are the application of scientific research and new knowledge of agricultural practices. Provision of training, organizing meeting and other experience sharing forums is some of the means of educating farmers so as to empower them and thereby to increase their productivity. Women are less likely in attending trainings, meetings as well as experience sharing sessions as compared to men. Different reasons have been mentioned in this. Most training sessions organized in the study sites by governmental and non-governmental organizations are targeting men. From the beginning, the mandate of selecting trainees is given to men and therefore they tend to give priority for men instead of women. Widow and just few model farmer women are encouraged to attend. There are times when women afraid to go to public space together with their husbands, though they are interested to attend. On the other side, married women have to get permission from their husbands and most of the time men will not allow them to attend. There are husbands who used to say "If you attend what you will do. It is enough if I attend." The intention of this saying is the wives can get information obtained from meetings, trainings through their husbands.

Even, women are invited to attend on trainings most of them failed to attend due to lack of time and societal gender stereotype and discrimination. Of those who attend at meetings, trainings, and experience sharing forums, the majority of them prefer to be silent, especially if the session is a mixture of men and women attended. When women rarely speak up on such occasions, their idea will not be accepted by the majority of men and moreover, they are considered as weird as they break the society's norm of the shyness of women.

Thus, the ascribed gender roles of women that limits their mobility outside the home and the burden, the socio-cultural attitudes considering public space as a men's world, limiting low self-esteem of women and others limit women's participation in meetings, trainings and experience sharing forums thereby denies women's empowerment through imparting and acquiring new information.

Discussants have indicated that efforts have been made by an Agro-biodiversity project which is undertaken by EBI and by other government structures to address the training needs of women. In Angacha, for instance, women have been attending training on *enset* processing. Discussants of Menjar-Shenkora described that as there is an improvement in the provision of training opportunities for women, especially in natural resource preservation and conservation, different cereal packages, health packages, adult education and so on. In Gimbichu and Yayu, women are benefiting from training specifically on health packages including pregnancy related issues, family planning, sanitation etc.

Despite this encouraging effort in creating access to information that concerns women, organizers of trainings do not consult women so as to assess their training needs as well as their convenient time to take the training. Thus, most training has failed to consider the convenient timing of women since they have multiple responsibilities. According to an informant from Menjar-Shenkora if men and women expected to take training in the same thematic area in a separate session, the number of days that men and women do attend training will be 4 and 1, respectively.

The study finds out that female who are the head of households have better training opportunities as compared to married women. As described above, the reason is that due to the perception that if a husband attends a meeting or training, a wife can acquire the knowledge and skill through her husband.

Wikigender.org (2010) found out that due to the distinct role that men and women are involved in producing, reproductive and community roles they usually have different knowledge about, and preferences for, plants and animals. A research finding of Dorothy and Edokat (2012) on the gender dimensions of biodiversity has identified that rural women in Sub-Saharan African has indigenous knowledge and skill to select seeds and plant breeders based on their cross effects, stability, multiple uses, and maturation dates. "For example, women's criteria for choosing certain food crop seeds may include cooking time, meal quality, taste, resistance to bird damage and ease of collection, processing, preservation and storage. Men are more likely to consider yield, suitability for a range of soil types and ease of storage (Wikigender.org 2010)."

Discussants in Menjar-Shenkora confirmed as women have better knowledge in identifying the types of *teff* that can be best for *injera*. In Angacha, selecting and preserving the seeds of spice and vegetable varieties are the role of women. They also have traditional knowledge on *enset* disease prevention methods. Women have better knowledge than men in identifying the types of *enset* varieties and their importance in terms of their yielding quality, nutritional, resisting diseases and so forth.

Both men and women farmers play an important role as decision makers in agricultural biodiversity management. They decide when to plant, harvest and process their crops. They decide how much of each crop variety to plant each year, how much seed to save from their own production and what to buy or exchange. All these decisions affect the total amount of genetic diversity that is conserved and used. However, a clear gender differentiation in roles and responsibilities in agriculture, causing men and women to be responsible for the management of different aspects of agro-biodiversity. Women play key roles in the management of agricultural biodiversity. For instance, women provide much of the farm labor process and store grains and other crops, and prepare the food. Because they also preserve the best seed for planting, they play a key role in managing plant genetic in many places (Unesco.org 2014).

The findings of the study also indicated that women in the study areas have an indispensable role in indigenous seed variety selection, preservation, applying anti-pest chemicals, storing and so on. However, while women are increasingly seen as embodying specific biodiversity knowledge and although an increasing number of experiences highlight the sustainable manner in which women use, biodiversity, their role in biodiversity management and decision making process is often ignored.

From the above discussion, it is possible to conclude that there is no gender equality in access to and control over resources. Access to and controls over productive resources are most of the time centrally held by men. Women's lack of access and control of resources further limits the bargaining power of women in their relationship with their husbands. The implication of having unequal access and control of productive resources resulted in a decrease of productivity. The relationship between women's access and control over productive resources and productivity has described by UN.org (2012) as: "if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20 to 30 percent, raising total agricultural output in developing countries by 2.5 to 4 percent, in turn reducing the number of hungry people in the world by 12 to 17 percent."

A study made by Howard and Smith (2006:45) about female headed households; access and control over resources in Tigray Regional states has mentioned that "household headship is difficult to define. This is due to the fact that headship is a category of social status that can only be defined relative and culturally. However, in

most patriarchal cultures household headship nearly by definition a male position. Conversely, female household headship is also generally recognized in cases where an adult male is completely absent.”

Thus, most Ethiopian societies, including people of the study areas are patriarchal and thus the decision making power reside in the hands of men. According to the norms and beliefs of societies, men are expected to be the head and bread winner of a household and women are more likely dependent economically, socially and politically on their men counterparts. Thus the general and the root cause of gender inequality in the division of labor and access to and control over resources is the patriarchal structure. Cultural and religious influence, level of awareness/ education of background are specific reasons for unequal relationships between men and women.

Informants were asked to state the overall opportunities and challenges that women have been facing in each respective study area. Access to appropriate technologies like grinding mill and power saving stove are mentioned as opportunities for females. These technologies used for females to lighten and facilitate their work and thereby to save their energy and time from what they used traditionally. Especially the power saving stove has different advantages. First, it saves the energy of women that is used to collect firewood. Second, it protects women from Trachoma resulted from the smoke when females used in traditional ways. Third, the power saving stove has a contribution to conserve the environment by decreasing deforestation.

Training opportunities organized by both governmental and non-governmental organizations especially on family planning and infection prevention issues have helped them to determine the number and spacing of their children as well as to protect their families’ health although just few women are attending.

Conversely, violence against women such as rape, female genital circumcision, wife battering, and insulting commonly identified as challenges for females in the study areas. At specific study area level, harmful traditional practices like early marriage in Menjar-Shenkora as well as Gimbichu and abduction in Gimbichu and Yayu are some of the challenges of women.

An informant from Angacha described that at household level, women are usually insulated and battered by their husbands when husbands perceive as their wives made mistakes or for the little mistake that wives committed. In the 2011 Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey, men and women were asked whether wife beating is justified or not. 68 percent of women and 45 percent of men have agreed that a husband has to beat his wife when she burns food, argues with him, goes out without telling him, neglects the children, or refuse sexual intercourse with him. The survey has also compared the attitude of wife beating in rural and urban areas. Accordingly, 76 percent and 46 percent of women in rural and urban areas, respectively, have agreed that wives have to be beaten by their husbands if they failed to respect them in relation to the stated activities (CSA 2012). This implies that women themselves accept the superiority of men regarding the stated issues. Lack of appropriate technology aimed at reducing the physical burden of agricultural women is cited as one of the challenges. Farming tools such as *mofer*, *kenber* and *enset* processing tools in Anghacha, for instance, is inconvenient for females to plow and process food, respectively. The *enset* processing tools are outdated and they are reported as time and energy intensive that makes the *enset* processing activity tiresome and for women.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study finds out that men and women in the study areas have distinct productive, reproductive and community roles. In productive activities such as crop production and rearing of animals, although women have a significant contribution in the productive activities of crop production and rearing of animals they are considered as co-farmers or assistances of their husbands instead of agents. The arduous reproductive tasks are overwhelmingly undertaken by women. The tasks are considered as routine, time and labor intensive. In community role, women often perform the activities which are the extension of domestic chores. They are underrepresented in leadership and decision making activities in the community.

Women perform virtually all the tasks which are required for the maintenance of the well being of their families as well as the community. However, the majority of the work done by women tends to be unrecognized, invisible and undervalued. Especially, the reproductive tasks of women often describe as “women’s work” to denote its lower status and to put boundary for men not to involve in such tasks. The field, domestic and community heavy workloads of women exposed them to different problems. The activities are required women to work longer hours than men. Gender socialization has oriented girls to follow the footsteps of their mothers in carrying out domestic works and which have a negative impact on their education, health and social statuses.

It is hardly to find women in associations as members and leaders as compared to men. The minimal participation of women in leadership and decision making, training and experience sharing forums in the community are resulted from the unfair division of labor between men and women that they have at home, field as well as in the community. Although Female head of households is attending on trainings organized for farmers on biodiversity conservation, family planning and infection prevention most of the married women failed to participate. This is, on the one hand, due to lack of time and lack of permission from their husbands on the other. Failing to attend on training and other experience sharing mechanism deprived women from getting information about appropriate technologies, health and others and which have a negative impact on the

productivity of women in particular and societies in general.

The ownership of productive resources has also a gender dimension. Lack of command over property such as land, livestock, agricultural inputs and the like is identified as the most severe form of inequality between men and women in the society. Women's subordination in access to and control over resources limits their bargaining power on various issues at household and community level.

The preservation and management of biodiversity and plant genetic resources is now widely recognized as essential to food security. Because women are responsible for supplying their families with food and care, they often have special knowledge of the value and diverse use of plants for nutrition, health and income. Consequently, they are frequently the preservers of traditional knowledge of indigenous plants. Women have been playing a key role in selecting and storing of high yielding and indigenous seeds, although the contribution of women in the management and conservation of biodiversity doesn't account for and undervalued.

Access to appropriate technology like power saving stove and training opportunities are identified as the advantages that women are getting. To the contrary, violence against women, inconvenience of farming tools, lack of other appropriate technology to ease reproductive tasks are examples of the challenges of women have been facing in the study area.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the following possible solutions are recommended so as to narrow the existing gap.

1. Awareness raising and creation mechanisms should be employed by governmental organizations such as women's affairs offices of the *Woredas*, Institute for biodiversity Conservation, especially through its project and other stakeholders in the society about the importance of gender equality in the division of labor, access to and control over resources, leadership and decision making roles and the role to be played by the male members of household in sharing reproductive tasks.
2. The productive, reproductive and community tasks undertaken by women should be recognized and valued by the society and women's contribution should be accounted for in the statistics of the national economy.
3. The knowledge, skill and experience of women in managing and conserving biodiversity should be recognized and valued. They also should be encouraged to continue to participate in the community level biodiversity conservation and management programs.
4. Enabling conditions should be created for women to have access to and control over productive resources, including land, credit, appropriate technology, cattle and the like to empower them thereby to increase their bargaining power at household and community levels.
5. Favorable environment should be created for women to attend meetings, trainings, and other experience sharing programs by availing appropriate technology that can lighten their work as well as aware men about the importance women's empowerment for the member of the households in particular and for the societies in general.
6. Policies, plans, and projects of EBI should mainstream gender dimensions so as to create an enabling environment for women to contribute and benefit from the endeavors of the Institution as of their men counterparts.
7. Further research needs to be carried out so as to get a fuller picture and a wider array of solutions to ensure that women in the study areas receive the balanced benefit from agricultural activities.

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