

Gender Mainstreaming within Agriculture and Natural Resources Institutions in the Sudan: Gaps and Ways Forward

Omer Tyseer Elhadi

Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development
Faculty of Agriculture
University of Khartoum, Sudan
P. O. Box 32 postal code 13314 Shambat, Khartoum, Sudan.

Abstract

This study investigates the level of gender mainstreaming on planning and implementation of activities within number of governmental, nongovernmental and academic organizations in Sudan. Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action including legislation policies or programs in all areas and at all levels. Organizations included on this research are entities that mainly involved on natural resources management disciplines, humanitarian activities, and academia. The problem stated on this study stemmed on the fact that information on agriculture and natural resources management domains including farming, forests, range management, livestock production is not disaggregated by sex and this situation resulted in an ambiguity about gender roles and rights with concern to the use and control of resources in the Sudan. The methodology used on this study was purposive sampling using semi structured interviews to elicit information from selected representatives of organizations within Khartoum City the capital of the Sudan. The study revealed that there is lack of knowledge on gender concepts and lack of skillful expertise on gender within some of the studied organizations and thus gender mainstreaming is not fulfilled yet. It also showed that there are either no regulations or no commitment to regulations on gender policies within the studied organizations; therefore, gender policies on domain of agriculture and natural resources management are not formulated, neither activated. The study concluded that establishment of gender research units within academic institutions is necessary. Those units can be platforms to source and develop knowledge on gender mainstreaming within domains of natural resources and agriculture. Those units can be linked to decision making processes within institutions involved in natural resources and agriculture, where gender policies, could be developed and applied and thus gender mainstreaming could be achieved within agriculture and natural resources institutions in the Sudan.

Introduction

In Sudan natural resources and agriculture sectors are managed through Agriculture Research Corporation, National Forest Corporation, Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, High Council of Environment and Development, as well as, some nongovernmental organizations (Nimir and Elgizouli, 2010) subject of gender in Sudan is mainly addressed within academic institutions i.e. Ahfad Women University is one of the leading institutions that process an academic degree on gender studies (Institute of Women, Gender and Development Studies official website, 2015). The author of this paper is understanding the notion of gender as the socially, politically and religiously defined roles and identities for women and men on their societies (Bedri, 2001). Most governmental and nongovernmental organizations in Sudan understand gender as introducing or integrating activities that concerns women and men on programs and projects conducted but gender has not been regulated within component of policies that are developed or directed by government institutions or private sectors. The investigation of this study was based on the argument that information on agriculture and natural resources management domain including farming, forests, range management, livestock production is not disaggregated by sex (Daoud, 2014 ; Badri, 2001) This situation is resulting in an ambiguity about gender roles and rights when it comes to the use and control of natural resources in Sudan.

In Sudan, gender (Badri, 2001) is enjoying different roles and situations from well politically and economically empowered groups in central Sudan to marginalized ones in war and conflict areas. However, accurate statistics or proven researches on situations of gender in the Sudan as general are not sufficient. It is not known exactly why different genders got different positions and roles. The social and political environment that gives different genders different situations in Sudan need to be more researched and analyzed. Policy makers in ministries, research institutions and students in natural resources fields would need to understand the gender sensitivity (Badri,2001) in researches, planning and implementation of development programs and that gender mainstreaming (Badri, 2001) need to be considered on policies and planning of resources management. Climate changes stresses on a country like Sudan is also adding an eager necessity to consider developing of gender policies among involved sectors. In this paper, the level of gender mainstreaming in policy planning within studied institutions is explored. Gender mainstreaming as a policy of planning has been suggested to be introduced, developed and legitimated through establishment of gender research units within academic institutions involved on agriculture and natural resources management i.e. faculties of agriculture, forests, animal production, and etc.

Literature Review

The strategy of gender mainstreaming is defined in ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997-2 as : the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action including legislation policies or programs in all areas and at all levels ,it is a strategy for making women as well as men concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political ,economic and social spheres, so that women and men benefit equally and equality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality (United Nations,2012)Government and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programs so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men respectively (Beijing platform for action 1995 para,79 cited in United Nations, 2012).The following are some of the areas where gender mainstreaming can be applied. On policy analysis and development for example, mainstreaming strategy seeks to ensure that gender considerations are routinely included in the assessment of policy issues, options and impacts a long with socio economic dimensions as well so that the aim of the policy would be gender equality besides, growth, efficiency, poverty reduction and sustainability (United Nations, 2012). Gender mainstreaming in research seeks to ensure that gender issues are taken into consideration in planning the overall research agenda as well as in formulation of specific projects (United Nations, 2012).

On designing specific projects, gender mainstreaming means that consideration of the purpose and scope of the project and whether these can be formulated to reflect the perspectives and priorities of women as well as men (United Nations, 2012). In providing of technical assistance, gender mainstreaming seeks to ensure that initiatives undertaken support gender equality objectives and this would require consideration of the expected results and how these react to gender equality issues (United Nations, 2012).

Gender mainstreaming policy within South African Development Community SADC

South African communities are considered the pioneer in tacking of gender issues in development and their experience is worth noting if gender in African context is to be mentioned. South African development communities include, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, and Tanzania Gender mainstreaming as central strategy in development was acknowledged right from the establishment of SADC as shown on the declaration and treaty of SADC in 1992 and was revised again in 2004. Gender mainstreaming in SADC was understood as understanding the principles of human rights, democracy and rule of law as well as equity and balance and exchange of mutual benefits between men and women. Then a critical step was taken to address the special issues of gender as a gender unit was established in 1996. South African Development Community heads of governments adopted the SADC declaration on gender and development and its addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women and Children In 1997 and 1998 respectively. SADC has committed “to place gender firmly on the agenda of the SADC Program of Action and Community Building Initiative. In 1997, the SADC [Council of Ministers](#) adopted the [SADC Gender Policy](#). Ministers Responsible for Gender and Women’s Affairs also adopted the policy(SADC official website, 2015)

One of the main strategies of SADC member states RISP plan is to Mainstream gender into all sectoral policies, program and activities at national and regional level through gender responsive planning, policy development and implementation, gender capacity building and training, and the collection of gender disaggregated data.

The plans also include acceleration the development of explicit gender policies and establish and strengthen national gender coordination machineries; harmonize them at regional level, and develop a regional gender policy (SADC official website, 2015)

Method of data Collection

The methodology for this study is based on qualitative interviewing using semi structured interviews for selected representatives of institutions and organizations. In addition, review of documents and reports on gender mainstreaming was done. Eleven institutions were selected for the interviewing using purposive sampling as the researcher aimed to approach actors who are relevant to the subject of the study. Those 11 institutions were, Faculty of Forests, Faculty of Animal Production within University of Khartoum, Ahfad Women University, Development Studies and Research Institute at University of Khartoum. Sudanese Development Organization NIDAA, International Fund for Agriculture Development IFAD, Sudanese Organization for Research and Development SORD, Ministry of Agriculture, National Corporation of Forestry and Agricultural Research Corporation

Data analysis

Content analysis is used to analyze the interviews, content of interviews where categorized according to the relevancy of institution to the concept of gender mainstreaming, importance of gender training for the staff of the institution and finally how the interviewed institution can play role on producing a gender mainstreaming policies

Results and Discussions

Gender gap on institutions and organization in Sudan

The following section is based on the main results of the study conducted in period from October to December 2014(results of eight organizations are discussed below)

Development Studies and Research Institute in University of Khartoum DSRI

The Development Studies and Research Institute in University of Khartoum DSRI is one of the main actors that works to integrate gender mainstreaming in policies of the country. The unit was established in 1978 as a program for gender with the support from Dutch Agency. The unit is supposed to produce policies related to gender integration in planning through achievement of millennium development goals. The unit work as expertise, training, design studies, organize workshops or conferences to advocate for equity, social justice and peace in the Sudan. The influence of the unit on gender awareness at level of community is qualitative because the unit affects policies of the country as it creates a link between the government and the civil society; it is a neutral platform that gathers different actors to listen to their views through training courses and workshops. Also the unit works to introduce gender concepts for women political leaders in the government to help them get better understanding for concepts of gender. The actor of Gender and Development Unit in Development Studies and Research Institute in University of Khartoum thinks that the work for gender within the unit is not specified, the unit is elaborating its scope; *“the gender itself is a broad concept, there is a need for specification. It would be good if there is specified units that deals with gender concepts on its special fields, like law, political sciences, economics and agriculture”*(interview with DSRI actor). So the actor have mentioned that the establishment of gender research unit in universities such as Khartoum University will be useful to provide disaggregated data of gender on agriculture and natural resources management and by this way the university we will support the concept of gender mainstreaming.

Institute of Women, Gender and Development Studies

In Sudan the Institute of Women, Gender and Development Studies (IWGDS) which is located within Ahfad Women University is the only academic institution that is responsible for providing academic degrees on gender and development in the country now. The institute aims to promote the integration of gender studies as university courses at Ahfad and other universities, to advocate for gender mainstreaming in development and to influence policies of gender on institutions. However, according to the interviewed actor, the institute is challenged by the shortage of disaggregated data and analytical studies which help to understand the causes of discrimination,

differences and opportunities for different groups specifically for rural women and men. Therefore, it can be argued that providing a technical unit which will be able to develop studies that can reflect the situations of gender especially within agriculture, food security and natural resources management is of important need.

This unit can help to provide a base line data for developing gendered mainstream policies in development programs at the level of the whole country. In regards to how IWGDS can promote gender mainstreaming policies, the actor responded that their institute can work as technical expertise on training of gender concepts and theorizing for involved actors including academic universities staff.

Gender Mainstreaming and Agricultural Unit in Ministry of Agriculture GMAU

In Ministry of Agriculture gender mainstreaming is represented on Gender mainstreaming and Agricultural Unit. The unit consists of 4 units, policy formation unit that is responsible for securing of gender integration on development policies to achieve food security and development. Unit for projects evaluation and monitoring which work to conduct projects according to relative advantages for each state in Sudan, a proposal would be designed and presented to funding agencies. A research unit responsible for designing studies and research based on disaggregated data and finally a training unit provides training on concepts of gender and gender integration on development. In Gender mainstreaming and Agricultural Unit, the staff is committed to women empowerment and gender equality through training sessions carried out by the unit for its employees. However, the Ministry of Agriculture does not have its own gender policy. The staff of the unit only works as technical expertise to conduct surveys or trainings demanded from other institutions or organizations but they do not have the resources or the strategies within the Ministry of Agriculture to design their own surveys or trainings. Accordingly, the interviewed actors has expressed the necessity of building linkages with academic institutions to conduct training and studies. Moreover, the mission and activities of gender unit within Ministry of Agriculture is under risk of termination due to lack of funding and that is why the actor of the unit is expressing the necessity for connecting and networking with academic institutions which can take part on implementing the training and the surveys conducted by the unit.

Agriculture Research Corporation ARC

Agriculture Research Corporation is the institute that is responsible for conducting researches, baseline surveys, and research experiments on areas of agriculture, livestock and fisheries. The corporation has branches according to the administrative division of the Sudan. As the actor was asked about the relevancy of the corporation to gender she replied that *"the corporation has focal persons for gender integrations on projects. Moreover, there are training on gender concepts conducted for staff of the corporation but those training are not conducted on continued or established manner and mostly are conducted to satisfy donors"* (interview with ARC actor). She further mentioned that *"researchers on experimental fields in Agriculture Research Corporation need to understand the social background of the communities in form of base line surveys that have gender dimension or gender data"*. In this manner, researchers would know the needs and recommendations of members of local communities. Accordingly, researchers can implement experiments considering the communities' needs. She considers the gap on gender within Agriculture Corporation is represented on the lack of understanding the concepts of gender by the staff of the corporation and within community members where experiments are conducted. According to her, if a gender research unit should be established within education institutions, the gender focal persons in ARC could be the contacts with the unit to coordinate training of staff within the corporation. Particularly, there is an immediate need for training on design of researches based on gender needs

National Forest Corporation

Forests management in Sudan is coordinated by the National Forest Corporation NFC, the actor explained the relevancy of the corporation to gender in accordance to the combination of the staff working in the corporation, but he also explained that they are concerned with gender because there are different roles played by different genders in forest management at community level. He mentioned that *"women represent 70 %of the staff working on NFC and some of them entitled leadership positions and community level women are involved on management of forests through collecting of wood and non-timber products"* (interview with NFC). Accordingly, there is need to train the women and men within NFC on gender mainstreaming on planning and budgeting of projects and programs conducted by the corporation. On the same manner, women at community level so those women, must be trained on how to maximize their economic benefit from activities they perform in forests.

For instance, at gum Arabic Belt area in Western Sudan, women are participating on gum harvesting and organized in form of Community Based Organizations, therefore, those CBOs need to be trained on microfinance projects, management of nurseries and concepts of gender in response to the expected role of the corporation on producing of gender mainstreaming policies, the actor replied that NFC need to be formally linked to training centers and institutions involved on producing knowledge on gender.

Faculty of Animal Production- University of Khartoum

The actor of Faculty of Animal production had expressed the relevancy to gender through the involvement of the faculty in the training of some community based organizations on livestock keeping and poultry production within Sudan. However, the actor mentioned that the community members on areas where they conducted training still lack the knowledge on perceptions of gender; therefore it is necessary training gender units to be established within universities, so awareness on gender concepts would be more increased within communities meant with better efficiency on livestock keeping. If this to be achieved in future, the Faculty of Animal Sciences can be involved on designing of gender based training programs for both CBOs members and academic staff.

International Fund for Agriculture Development IFAD

The International Fund for Agriculture Development IFAD is an international development agency working in field of agriculture development (Sayed and Abdallah, 2010). IFAD is implementing a project of natural resources management in Kordofan State. This project includes, gender components of capacity building for staff and community members on gender issues. IFAD also has appointed a gender focal person to monitor and implement gender training programs IFAD actor has mentioned that *'after training of communities or staff on gender perspectives, there is a need to make gender analysis and to develop gender indicators to understand whether our activities were efficient or successful. For us in IFAD, we do not know how to put those indicators. He further mentioned that technical expertise's on gender analysis in Sudan are rare and thus many projects especially within IFAD organization are not being assessed according to gender sensitivity'* (interview with IFAD actor). Therefore, the necessity for gender analysis and for institution that can provide knowledge on gender and gendered methodology of research is important. The actor also discussed that in Sudan specified gender expertise in Sudan are rare *'when IFAD announce for a job of gender specified candidate only around 5 candidates would apply for the job'* moreover he mentioned that gender is generally or abstractly understood there is a need to link gender to specific fields for instance to agriculture, natural resources management and the like. IFAD is involved on gender dimensioned programs without policy guided from government institutions, the actor think establishing of gender training unit in universities can help to link experiences of academics and practitioners on conceptualizing gender on development.

The Sudanese Organization for Development Call NIDAA

The Sudanese Organization for Development Call NIDAA, is a nongovernmental organization works on field of food security, conflict resolution and peace building by integrating gender concepts to the programs and projects implemented on mentioned fields. In regards to NIDAA reflect on their experience working using gender perspectives as guidelines. The actor of NIDAA mentioned that *'there is no national plan for gender policies and there is no check list for gender work in regards to gendered dimension projects implemented by NGOs'* (interview with NIDAA actor). This would imply that every development agency would develop their own gender indicators or activities. Therefore according to the actor, there is a need for referable gendered policies that are developed within government institutions and according to these indicators, and a proper gendered analysis can be conducted for implemented projects

Summary of discussions

It can be argued that to integrate gender into all sectors and programs, gender policies have to be developed with sound and responsive planning put in place. Most importantly, participation and coordination of government, national institutions and international partners is needed for such integration to be articulated and function. In the South African experience the states of South African countries were the initiators of mainstreaming of gender on its different sectors through evolving of a strategic planning and initiating of explicit gender policies. The government is one of the main initiator, the facilitator and the guard of gender mainstreaming. Another reviewed case study on gender mainstreaming conducted in Mozambique, Senegal, and Democratic Republic of Congo (UN-Habitat, 2012).

The study aimed at developing the capacity of local councils, municipalities, nongovernmental and community based organizations to carry out strategic planning and budgeting and to mainstream gender in their decision making and implementations. Results from this study showed that, training sessions, and participatory role play sessions were very positively valued by participants, community involvement was pretty high and participants considered women priorities were head. However, the process of mainstreaming should have been explained as a general municipal practices and not only a discrete project practice applied for specific funding (UN-Habitat,2012). From this African experience we can conclude that gender mainstreaming could be also decentralized to level of municipal councils and community based organizations in addition to centered institutions or decision makers and gender mainstreaming practices such as planning and budgeting of programs need to be continuously practiced as part of the normal managerial performance. However, since the culture of gender mainstreaming planning is not deeply rooted yet, more training programs on gender mainstreaming are needed to be conducted for both government and non-government institutions at different scaling.

In Sudan context, as it showed the gap on establishing of a solid gendered mainstreaming policy within natural resources and agriculture sectors, is firstly, the lack of well experts and lack of knowledge on gender concepts, specifically, on gender analysis and gender research methodology. However, the mainstreaming of gender in Sudan is so far is processed and undertaken by few academic institutions and development agencies; the experience of DSRI, Ahfad University are examples, yet, those academic institutions are challenged by being working under no declaration or policies that are formed by the government. From results with interviewed International Fund for Agricultural Development IFAD and Sudanese Organization for Development Call NIDAA, it is clear that the market is lacking provision of enough technical expertise on gender analysis and experts on forming gender indicators for the Sudan to guide those NGOS on their monitoring and evaluation activities unlike the experience of South African contexts.

Although Ministry of Agriculture, is technically hosting a gender unit that works to introduce gender in food security and agriculture through conducting of training and researches, however, their work is does not fit or correspond with a defined gender policies since the Ministry of Agriculture does not have its own gender policy. This would also imply the lack of political will and interest to have gender mainstreaming policies within Ministry of Agriculture. Following the insights of the South African experience on gender mainstreaming it can be concluded that for building gendered policies, firstly, it is important to develop operational mechanisms for gendered policy which means every sector might need to develop his own gendered policy; the government on this case could play as a gate keeper for these sector policies. Secondly, to promote culture that facilitate gender mainstreaming within societies for instance concepts of equity and equality on gender need to be facilitated within syllabus of schools and universities. Thirdly, build capacity of staff from different institutions to integrate gender on planning and programs of their work and on this regards we argue that universities can be centers or hubs of knowledge on gender concepts for stakeholders involved on development. Finally, ensure the commitment for integration of development projects with concepts of gender equality is achieved through processing of documents, constitutions and etc. and for Sudan this could be an advanced stage on achieving gender mainstreaming on development.

Name of institution	Type of Institution	Relevancy to gender	Gap on gender mainstreaming
Unit of gender and development- Khartoum University	Education Institution- public sector	Platform that advocate for gender concepts within GOS and NONGOS	Inability to advocate for gender within agriculture and natural resources domains
Ahfad University	Education Institution Private sector	The first women University in Sudan Produce master degrees on gender and development Hosting international institute for gender and development studies in	Lack of information- data on gender analysis within natural resources and agriculture domain
Gender mainstreaming Unit- Ministry of Agriculture	Governmental Organization	Training Researching Policy formulations	Inability to develop their own policies and strategies for gender mainstreaming
International Fund for Agricultural Development IFAD	Nongovernmental Organization	Conducting programs with gender components	Lack of ability to develop gender indicators- gender analysis for natural resources management projects
NIDAA Sudanese Organization for Development	Nongovernmental Organization	Peace building and conflict resolutions within post conflict communities	Lack of national plan for gender policy Lack of gender indicators to develop gender sensitive projects
Agriculture Research Corporation	Government Organization	Gender focal persons	Lack of awareness on gender within staff members Inability to develop gender based researches
National Forest Corporation	Government Organization	Gender roles within the corporation and the community are defined	Lack of advanced training on budgeting and planning considering gender at staff level. Lack of training on gender mainstreaming related topics at community level
Faculty of Animal Production- University Of Khartoum	Educational Institution- public sector Government	Experience with gender concepts and training	Lack of understanding concepts of gender at community level

Table 1: institutions and their relevancy to gender and gaps on gender

Sources: our own work

Conclusion

Actors involved on academia, natural resources management and agriculture in Sudan were interviewed in this study. Actors have stressed their relevancy to gender and their weaknesses to achieve and maintain gender mainstreaming policies in their performances. Interviewed actors have also assured that academic institutions can push to gain gender mainstreaming policies through establishing of units or centers that can work as sources of knowledge on gender concepts and theorizing. Academic institutions can work as technical bodies on conducting of gender analysis and collection of disaggregated data in collaboration with organizations and development agencies which work on rural areas. Academic institutions can be platforms for different actors to meet and exchange experiences on gender which can help to create an environment suitable for developing of gendered mainstream policies. Establishment of a gender unit in agricultural universities is a necessity for academic references for gender analysis and gender sensitivity on planning for agriculture, and natural resources management. Government institutions and nongovernmental organizations are considered main actors of these units besides academic institutions.

Gender training units in agricultural universities, can influence and guide the governmental institutions to develop gender mainstreaming policies. This could be achieved by networking of these units with decision making institutions on field of natural resources and agriculture. According to this manner, capacities and performance of institutions involved on natural resources management and agriculture can be improved to achieve gender equity within agriculture and natural resources domain

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