

Gender-Sensitive Strategies for Adaptation to Climate Change: Drawing on Indian Farmers' Experiences

Ongoing Research of the FAO

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) and local Indian institutions in Andhra Pradesh are currently addressing the gender aspects of coping with climate variability and longterm change within the project *Gender-sensitive Strategies for Adaptation to Climate Change: Drawing on Indian Farmers' Experiences*.

The project captures how men and women farmers in drought-prone and flood-prone districts perceive and respond to inter-annual climatic variability and long term changes in climate through participatory focus group discussions and a quantitative survey. These accounts, combined with institutional analysis and meteorological analysis, are used to characterize the climate risks men and women farmers are facing and their coping strategies for food security.



Project objectives:

1. Climatic trends: To characterize the local climate conditions and risks, to identify trends in climate variability over the past 25-30 years (according to recorded data), to compare how recorded data corresponds to men and women farmers' observations, and to characterize the local socio-economic situation in relation to climate trends.
2. Perceptions of climatic trends: To understand how men and women, boys and girls in farm households perceive and experience climatic shifts and how this is linked to food security.
3. Coping strategies for food security: To identify the coping strategies that men and women farmers utilize in order to ensure food security in times of climatic shifts, to understand the resources and decision making processes utilized, and to assess the related outcomes for food security.
4. Institutional context: To identify the institutions that support farmer decision making with regard to climate, agriculture and food security and to assess the extent to which institutional support is available, accessible and usable by men and women.
5. Methodology and advice: To collect best practices on farmer strategies for achieving food security, to develop a

replicable methodology for examining the gender dimensions of farmer responses to climatic shifts, and to communicate these to policymakers, other decision-makers, and practitioners in the field of climate change adaptation, disaster risk management and development.

The main outputs of the study will be:

1. Eight multi-disciplinary case studies examining men and women farmers' coping strategies to ensure food security in response to climatic shifts in rural Andhra Pradesh.
2. A replicable methodology and policy guidelines for addressing the gender aspects of adaptation to climate variability and change which can be extrapolated to other contexts.
3. Cross-disciplinary collaborations to confront the long-term challenges of climate change, food insecurity, poverty, and gender inequality.

Collaborating Organizations:

Acharya N. G. Ranga Agricultural University (ANGRAU) partners on meteorological data and analysis.

<http://www.angrau.net/>

Samatha Gender Resource Centre (SGRC), a unit of Andhra Pradesh Mahila Samatha Society, partners on village- and household-level research. <http://apmss.org/>

Initial Findings

The initial findings from the field research indicate that the farmers are observing changes in the seasonal patterns of rainfall and less rainfall overall, which is linked to diminishing water resources. Men and women spoke with concern of dwindling forest cover which had in past times of drought served as a source of supplementary food. Coping strategies, such as migration and livelihood diversification, are evident; it is very often the women who migrate and work as labourers (in construction) as men consider themselves farmers since they own land and women usually do not. In spite of both men and women sharing in the decision making process about coping strategies, it is ultimately the men who have the final word. Women are responsible for providing food for the family; however, compared to men, women have limited access to information on both farming options and support systems.