



ICID Young Professionals e-Forum (IYPeF)

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/6990321>

Role of Women in Irrigation and Drainage Sector

Background Note for Discussion

28 July 2016 to 15 August 2016

Introduction

Growth of agricultural sector has an important role in reduction of hunger and poverty. Women in rural areas perform various tasks such as producing agricultural crops, travelling for miles to collect water for their household, work as daily wage labourers in different enterprises, manage different members of the house, tend animals and undertake different livelihood strategies all at the same time, which are generally not counted as employment but are essential for the well-beings of rural households. Women make essential and immense contributions to the agricultural economy and rural development in most of the countries especially in developing countries in every aspect varying from forming the base of agriculture labour force to policy making.

In the rural areas where manual labour plays a significant role in Irrigated agriculture, women contribute more than 45% of the farm labour force on an average. In developing countries, this has been estimated as more than 50% and the share is further increasing due to continuing migration of male population out of the rural community in search of higher income jobs.

Women engaged in irrigation sector can be categorised broadly in to three segments, viz. farmers, irrigation managers and community organizers. However, they face many hurdles in making their contributions due to socio-cultural, institutional, economic and legal constraints, depending on the part of the world they belong.

As a male dominant sector, Irrigation and Drainage sector is not geared to accommodate women to actively participate in decision making process at that level. But increasing number of women at higher positions, as a result of professional and higher education, is an opportunity to enable them to influence decisions at planning, implementation and policy making level.

Keeping the above in view we are starting a discussion on ICID Young Professionals' e-Forum (IYPeF) on the topic '**Role of Women in Irrigation and Drainage**' to understand the problems being faced by women in the irrigation and drainage sector and how these can be addressed.

Objectives

This discussion on education in irrigation and drainage sector has the following objectives:

- To sensitize the participants on the role that women can and do play in Irrigation and Drainage sector and bring forward the unique challenges they face while in field, on duty or in business.



- To discuss the challenges faced by women engaged in irrigation and drainage sector and solutions to address those challenges under following three sub themes;
 - Social challenges – such as women especially in rural sector being restricted in participation of social organizations, meetings etc.
 - Legal restrictions – land ownership rights to women, voting rights to women in WUAs
 - Institutional enablements - Equal payment for women
- To understand status of role of women in
 - Water User Associations (WUAs)
 - Capacity Development (Trainers/ Community Organizers)
 - Irrigation Management
 - Training and Extension of training
- Gathering of sex-desegregated data for future research

Outcome

It is intended that discussion in IYPeF will explore answers to the following questions:

- (i) What role women can play in development and management of water resources?
- (ii) What restrictions, inequalities and challenges women face while performing their field activities - office, farm field etc?
- (iii) What are the policy provisions in respect of gender participation in the of agriculture and irrigation sector? Are these enough? If not what further is required to be done at policy and decision making level?
- (iv) Whether participatory irrigation management (PIM) acts have sufficient provisions to protect rights of women to encourage better participation and fair treatment to them?
- (v) What are the capacity development needs for better involvement and performance of women in agriculture and irrigation water management? What methodology should be adopted for fill capacity development gaps?

Role of Mentor

A couple of mentors will follow the discussions on the forum and provide their inputs and advice from time to time or whenever they feel necessary thereby steering the group to possible answer to the identified questions.

