



# Institute of Social Studies

## **GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

*Beyond rhetoric to practice: Operationalization of gender in a  
participatory project cycle.  
The case of Kitui Agricultural Project (KAP).*

*A research paper presented by*

*Wambua V. Mwikali*

*(Kenya)*

**In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for Obtaining the Degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

*Specialisation*

**(WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT)**

### **Members of the Examining Committee**

**Dr. B. Holzner  
Dr. W. Meynen**

**The Hague, December 2001**

**This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies; the views stated therein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Institute.**

**Research papers and theses are not made available for outside circulation by the Institute.**

**Enquires:**

***Postal Address:***

**Institute of Social Studies  
P.O. Box 29776  
2502 LT, The Hague  
The Netherlands**

**Telephone : -31-70-4260460  
Telefax: -31-70-4260799  
e-mail: postmaster@iss.nl**

***Location:***

**Kortenaerkade 12  
2518 AX, The Hague  
The Netherlands**

## **DEDICATION**

**To the memory of my mother, Janet Munyiva Nzyoka, I dedicate this paper. You  
were my first encounter with feminism. It is because of you that I am and it is  
because of you that I strive.**



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to acknowledge and thank all the people who made me make the decision to come to Holland and those who made my life in Holland a pleasant experience.

To my supervisor Brigitte Holzner for constantly challenging and supporting me through this paper and most of all for taking me through a stress free process.

To Vicky Meynen, my second supervisor, whose thoroughness and deep insight made me think beyond the obvious.

To Leonard Opolot for loving me, believing in me and urging me on.

To Dan Obat and Esther Nakaima for being the best friends they could be and making my life bearable.

To my friend Rita, for being there when I needed her.

To my Dutch friend Tom Kuhlman and his family, for being constantly in touch and being concerned about my wellbeing.

To my family and friends back home in Kenya and Uganda: Dad, Ndila, Nzyoka, Tua, Itumbi, Akinyi, Faith, Karl B, Trudi, Nduku, Mutisya, Yuni, Suzi, Salome and Edward. Thanks for urging me on and supporting me through the process.



## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1	Appearance of policy in Kitui Agricultural Project.....	35
---------	---	----

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

---

<b>ASAL</b>	Arid and Semi Arid Lands
<b>ASP</b>	Agricultural Support Project
<b>DDC</b>	District Development Committee
<b>DFRDS</b>	District Focus for Rural Development Strategy
<b>DSC</b>	District Steering Committee
<b>FDA</b>	Focal Development Area
<b>GOK</b>	Government of Kenya
<b>GAD</b>	Gender and Development
<b>KAP</b>	Kitui Agricultural Project
<b>LDC</b>	Locational Development Committee
<b>Sub DDC</b>	Divisional Development Committee
<b>Sub LDC</b>	Sublocational Development Committee
<b>PPAs</b>	Participatory Poverty Assessments
<b>WID</b>	Women in Development

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO STUDY

1.1	BACKGROUND .....	1
1.2	PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	2
1.3	STUDY OBJECTIVES.....	3
1.4	JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY .....	3
1.5	RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	3
1.6	SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .....	3
1.7	SITUATING MYSELF .....	4
1.8	METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES .....	4
1.9	STRUCTURE OF THE PAPER.....	5

### CHAPTER TWO: SHIFTS, CONCEPTUAL ISSUES AND DEBATES ON WOMEN IN THE DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE

2.1	INTRODUCTION .....	6
2.2	POLICY APPROACHES TOWARDS LOW INCOME WOMEN IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD .	6
2.2.1	THE WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT (WID) APPROACHES .....	6
2.2.2	GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT (GAD).....	8
2.3	PARTICIPATION .....	11
2.3.1	PARTICIPATION AS EMPOWERMENT .....	14
2.4	GENDER AND POLICY OPTIONS.....	16
2.5	CONCLUSION.....	20

### CHAPTER THREE: THINKING ABOUT POLICY: OVER VIEW OF THE POLICY AND PROGRAMME CONTEXT OF KITUI AGRICULTURAL PROJECT

3.1	INTRODUCTION .....	22
3.2	'GENDER BLINDNESS' IN POLICY AT THE BEGINNING .....	23
3.3	THE AWAKENING IN POLICY .....	24
3.3.1	WELFARE POLICY APPROACH.....	24
3.3.2	ANTI-POVERTY POLICY APPROACH .....	26
3.3.3	EQUITY POLICY APPROACH .....	30
3.3.4	EFFICIENCY POLICY APPROACH.....	32
3.4	CONCLUSION.....	33

## **CHAPTER FOUR: THE PARTICIPATORY PROJECT CYCLE OF KITUI AGRICULTURAL PROJECT**

---

<b>4.1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>4.2</b>	<b>THE PROJECT CYCLE OF KITUI AGRICULTURAL PROJECT.....</b>	<b>36</b>
4.2.1	PROJECT/FDA IDENTIFICATION.....	37
4.2.2	NEEDS ASSESSMENT (PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL).....	38
4.2.3	BASELINE SURVEY .....	42
4.2.4	DEVELOPMENT PLANNING WORKSHOP (LOGICAL FRAMEWORK APPROACH) .....	44
4.2.5	IMPLEMENTATION .....	45
4.2.6	MONITORING, FOLLOW-UPS AND INFORMATION.....	48
4.2.7	WEANING OFF PROCESS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT .....	49
<b>4.3</b>	<b>CONCLUSION: PARTICIPATION AS EMPOWERMENT IN KITUI AGRICULTURAL PROJECT.....</b>	<b>51</b>

## **CHAPTER FIVE: FROM RHETORIC TO RHETORIC?**

<b>5.1</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS.....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>		<b>57</b>
<b>ANNEXES.....</b>		<b>60</b>
<b>APPENDIX I: STEPS AND TASKS IN THE FDA PROCESS.....</b>		<b>61</b>
<b>APPENDIX II: ASP NATIONAL LEVEL ORGANIZATION.....</b>		<b>62</b>
<b>APPENDIX III: ASP DISTRICT PROJECT ORGANIZATION .....</b>		<b>63</b>

## **CHAPTER ONE: Introduction to study**

### **1.1 Background**

The strategy of the Government of Kenya and the Danish development policy emphasizes the strengthening of the role of women in the development process, making equal participation of women an integral part of development assistance in an effort to promote social, humanitarian and democratic ideals. This growing realization of the impact of gender in the development process has informed the project documents of Government of Kenya, Danida funded projects in the form of broad policy statements.

*“The projects are designed explicitly to impact on the cross cutting issues (gender, environment, human rights/improved self determination at the community level) ... ”*

*“The target beneficiaries are low income farmers (the majority being women) ... ”* (Agriculture Support Project in the Arid and Semi Arid Lands Districts of Kitui, Makueni and Taita Taveta, 1999:9)

Kitui Agricultural Project is one of four Arid Semi Arid Lands (ASAL) projects in the Agricultural Support Project funded by Danida. It has in essence been in existence as an integrated development project since 1981. These four ASAL districts are among eighteen pilot districts within the Agriculture Sector Investment Program for the testing of a two pronged strategy that entails a unified extension service and a demand driven process at the local level known as the Focal Development Area (FDA) Approach

Despite the length of time that Kitui Agricultural Project has been in operation and the broad policy backing for a gender perspective from both the government and Danida there are concerns that gender variables are still not being taken into consideration in the project cycle and activities of the projects.

This paper will endeavor to analyze the circumstances that may have limited the operationalization of a gender perspective into the participatory project cycle and activities of Kitui Agricultural Project.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

For projects to fulfil their function as vehicles of positive social change, it is imperative that they are able to ensure that gender considerations are made within the project cycle and in the project activities. Gender is critical in any development process. Locating gender centrally through out the life cycle of a project – from project identification, planning, implementation to monitoring and evaluation is crucial for the success of any intervention.<sup>1</sup> Though the intention is stated broadly in the policies of the government that gender needs to be paid attention to in projects, the reality tends to be different. There exists a gap between what is intended and what is seen in practice. Gender sensitivity is especially low among policy makers and implementers of policy such that operationalizing what is stated in policy has been a rather slow process. In addition to this situation, even when gender concerns are taken into account, the terms of including women are dubious and project implementers often do not understand the rationale behind operationalizing gender related guidelines.

Despite intentions formulated in policies, in Kenya women are still marginalized and subordinated. In the rural areas women are the majority of the population and while they contribute the largest share of rural labor force, they still form the majority living in poverty and are still the victims of all types of exploitation, with lower education levels and experiencing little or no improvement in the quality of their lives. (Development Policy for Arid and Semi Arid Lands, 1992, National Poverty Eradication Plan, 1999)

This paper intends to identify the dimensions that have made it difficult to operationalize a gender perspective within the Kitui Agricultural Project cycle and where this has apparently taken place the manner of inclusion of women into the project cycle and its activities. By assessing policy, the participatory project cycle and some activities of the project, the paper will identify the gap between intention and practice and discuss possible implications of participation on poor rural women's empowerment.

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.undp.org.np/pub/gender/refguide/gendr-ch02.htm](http://www.undp.org.np/pub/gender/refguide/gendr-ch02.htm) Downloaded on 10/12/2000

### **1.3 Study Objectives**

- The analytical objective of this paper is the identification and examination of the dimensions that have made it difficult to operationalize a gender perspective within the Kitui Agricultural Project cycle.
- The practical objective is the to examine the implications of participation on the empowerment of poor rural women.

### **1.4 Justification of the study**

In Kenya today, projects are still popular as vehicles of change in so far as developmental goals of poverty alleviation and resource management are concerned. Despite all these efforts, there appears to be more poverty, resource degradation and in many cases more under development than before. Though a lot has been written about the possible reasons for this situation, not much however is documented about gender and project cycle management and this area remains relatively new territory.

In addition, this research will not just be satisfied with engendering project cycle management but will qualify gender further by looking at the implications of participation upon poor rural women's empowerment.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- How is gender conceptualized (if at all) at the programme and policy levels underlying Kitui Agricultural Project?
- How are women located in the participatory project cycle and activities of Kitui Agricultural Project?
- Does the participatory project cycle of Kitui Agricultural Project have implications on the empowerment of poor rural women?

### **1.6 Scope and Limitations of the study**

The study will be limited to the Agriculture Support Project with very brief overviews of the general context in Kenya. The Agriculture Support Project selected for analysis represents a typical situation in Kenya where rural project interventions are actively making use of bottom up and top down approaches with a view to impacting on gender, poverty, environment and self-determination of rural communities for empowerment and sustainability. Kitui Agricultural Project has been selected as the

case study because it is the oldest of the four Agriculture Support Project areas and may provide more information and useful lessons for the agriculture sector with regards to Arid and Semi Arid Lands.

The key limitation of this study will occur from use and over reliance on secondary data. While the documents to be analyzed will provide insight to the situation and may be adequate to address all the issues that this study entails, the researcher will not get an opportunity to receive input and perspectives of the most important stakeholders – the rural women at project level.

### ***1.7 Situating Myself***

As a development practitioner concerned with rural development and having worked in rural areas for many years, I have seen projects come and go with minimal impact. With time I have became convinced that a major factor of project's dismal impact resulted from inadequate concern for gender in the very nature of the project cycle and the activities being implemented by projects. Considering that women are the majority in the rural areas and with the least amount of decision making power, I consider it impractical to design projects that perceive them as automatically included in categories such as the 'rural poor', the 'community' or the 'farmers'.

### ***1.8 Methodology and Data Sources***

This study will be both descriptive and analytical going through the policies underlying the project as well as the project cycle of the Agriculture Support Project (Specifically Kitui Agricultural Project) to see how gender interacts with it. Based on the framework of feminist debates on Women in Development, Gender and Development, Empowerment and Participation, and Gender and Policy options it will locate and analyze mechanisms that limit effective institutionalization and operationalization of a gender perspective in the participatory project cycle and the activities of the organization.

The research work is based mainly on secondary sources of data. Content analysis of Government of Kenya, Danida and Project texts, material, reports, manuals and documents will be undertaken from a feminist perspective to provide insight and reach conclusions. Additional material in the form of project data like statistics,

guidelines, terms of references, organizational charts, participatory methodology guidelines and secondary literature from western and African sources in libraries and the Internet will be used. My own experience as a project officer also will form an integral part of the analysis.

### ***1.9 Structure of the Paper***

- Chapter 1: This chapter makes an introduction of the project and a background of the study area.
- Chapter 2: This chapter will entail a critical review of various analytical frameworks relating to women in the development agenda. They will base on feminist debates on Women in Development (WID), Gender and Development (GAD), Empowerment and Participation as well Gender and Policy options.
- Chapter 3: This chapter will give an overview and critique of the policy and program context of the Agriculture Support Project (and specifically KAP) based on the theoretical frameworks of policy approaches toward low income women in the developing world and gender and policy options.
- Chapter 4: This chapter is a feminist critique and analysis of the participatory project cycle, the activities and perceptions of gender issues of the Kitui Agricultural Project based on the theoretical framework in chapter two.
- Chapter 5: This chapter ties together the findings of the paper, drawing conclusions based on both chapter three and four as well as more general conclusions emanating from the Kenyan context.



## **CHAPTER TWO: Shifts, conceptual issues and debates on women in the development discourse**

### **2.1 *Introduction***

This chapter introduces and reflects on the theoretical framework that will be used in analyzing the policy, programme and project practice of the Kitui Agricultural Project. The paper will use the analytical concepts of Women in Development (WID), Gender and Development (GAD) and Gender Policy based on the theoretical frameworks of Moser (1989) and Kabeer (1994,1999). In the same context, it will also look at the concepts of Empowerment and Participation and attempt to link them.

### **2.2 *Policy approaches towards low income women in the developing world***

Moser (1989) has identified five ideal type policy approaches to low income women in the third world. She groups them chronologically as welfare, equity, anti poverty, efficiency and empowerment.

#### **2.2.1 *The Women in Development (WID) Approaches***

The Women in Development (WID) framework that emerged in the 70's was about integrating women in the existing development processes often under the notion that this would improve their situation. Goetz (1997:3) explains that

*"WID approaches [were] based upon a politics of access – getting women into development agencies, including more women as recipients or clients of development programmes, ensuring that more development resources reached women directly."*

This framework focused only on women and viewed their exclusion from these processes as the major problem. WID according to Moser (1989) encompassed the three policy approaches of equity, anti poverty and efficiency.

The welfare approach:

This is the first social development approach dealing with women in third world countries. This approach excluded women's productive roles and the main assumption underlying it was that women are passive recipients of development and as a 'socially

'vulnerable' group are in need of special intervention in their engendered roles as wives and mothers.

*"Welfare provision for the family was targeted at women who along with the disabled and the sick, were identified as 'vulnerable groups', remaining the responsibility of the marginalized ministries of social welfare"*

(Moser, 1989:1807)

This approach is still popular because it operates within the existing gender division of labour and does not challenge power relations and the social structure.

The equity approach:

The equity approach as the first and original WID approach was concerned with women's unequal status compared to men despite their contribution to the development process through their productive, reproductive and community care roles. It recognized that state economic strategies had either ignored and/or had negative impact on women and

*"...acknowledges that they must be brought into the development process through access to employment and the market place." (Moser, 1989:1810)*

There is a basic assumption in this approach that the political participation and economic independence of women would lead to equal status with men and that once given equal opportunities with men, women's subordinate status would diminish. This approach did not gain a lot of popularity and support in the male dominated structures since it was viewed as a threat to male privilege.

The anti poverty approach:

The anti poverty approach that followed closely was concerned with women's poverty and aimed at assisting poor women to meet their basic needs. While recognizing inequality between men and women, this approach laid more emphasis on income inequality, which was viewed as linked to poverty rather than women's subordination.

*"Here women's issues are ...linked with the particular concern of third world women as the poorest of the poor." (Moser, 1989:1812)*

The assumption underlying this approach is that third world women's unequal status with men would be overcome by giving them economic choices through income generating activities. It did not challenge the structures that underlie and perpetuate

poverty and the productivity of women was normally designed around their reproductive roles. It is still a very popular approach due to the fact that it does not challenge the status quo.

The efficiency approach:

The more recent efficiency approach that is concerned with the efficient use of women's productivity is the more predominant approach today. It is no surprise that it has coincided with the neo-liberal discourse of the day that advocates for efficiency of markets and rolling back of the state. There is a general shift from women per se to economic productivity and growth.

*"...the shift from equity to efficiency reflected a specific economic recognition of the fact that 50% of the human resources available for development were being wasted or underutilized." (Moser, 1989:1813)*

This was viewed as affecting development negatively. The stress of this approach is more on development than on women with the underlying assumption is that the efficient and effective use of women's hitherto under utilized productivity will lead to economic gains for both women as a category and the nation state. There is also an assumption that women will have time to 'juggle' their productive, reproductive and community care activities. This approach is particularly popular today as it takes advantage of women as a resource in the face of diminishing resources for development by both the state and development agencies.

#### *2.2.2 Gender and Development (GAD)*

There was a shift from integration to mainstreaming in the 80's that

*"... [was] accompanied by the shift in focus from women to gender."*  
(Karl, 1995:102)

The Gender and Development (GAD) framework was more concerned with the socially constructed roles and relations between men and women and the social structures and processes that have reinforced women's subordinate situation. As stated in Parpart (2000:4), it argued

*"... that cultural assumptions and practices defining gender roles often impeded women's development [and] ...called for more attention to the voices and experiences of poor women, particularly their collective action , and for*

*focus on gender roles and relations, culture and socioeconomic inequalities..."*

The concern broadened from that of women in isolation, to incorporate other social hierarchies such as class, race, ethnicity, age, and national identity. The underlying notion being that if gender relations are socially constructed then they could be changed in order for women to acquire gender equality with men. In addition to being social and cultural constructs, there was also the notion and concern that certain structural rules and practices reinforced gender relations thereby keeping women subordinate to men. As Razavi and Miller (1995:14) point out

*"...gender subordination ...is constructed by the rules and practices of different institutions – household, market, state and the community."*

This necessitated the need to focus and analyze the internal workings of institutions in order to address the structural basis for gender inequality.

The perceptions and shifts in approaches coincided with the development thinking of the day and influenced development processes and interventions by governments and organizations.

The GAD framework has been taken up by many development organizations with policy statements and guidelines being made to the effect that gender concerns be made integral to the development process. That does not mean that goals envisaged in the WID framework are discarded and in fact in many situations the two have been implemented concurrently to address the issues of gender inequality. For the purposes of the study, both frameworks will be used for the analysis of the project cycle from a perspective that a project designed with assumptions of benefit to the whole 'community' may have differentiated outcomes with benefit only to some sub groups and in particular those who have means to access resources.

#### **Empowerment:**

As related and more in consistency with the GAD framework, the concept of empowerment has become central in contemporary development discourse and practice. Despite its widespread use in the policies and programs of aid agencies it has a wide range of meanings and interpretations which have to be assessed in the context of the development intervention.

According to Parpart (2000:4) and Bisnath and Elson (2000:1) the empowerment approach first emerged through Third World feminist scholars and women's organizations to frame and facilitate the struggle for social justice and women's equality through a transformation of social, economic and political structures at national and international levels. At the heart of this original conceptualization of empowerment were women's self-reliance, agency and self-transformation.

For feminists, the term empowerment is understood from the notion of power, its distribution and its use. Moser (1989:1815) identifies empowerment with the right to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change. According to Kabeer (2001:18-19), power can be viewed in terms of the ability to make choices, which necessarily implies alternatives. Empowerment in this case is broader than just the ability to access resources. It encompasses three inter related dimensions which make up choice i.e. resources which form the conditions under which choices are made, agency which lies at the heart of the process of making choices and achievements which are the outcomes of choices. Kabeer (2001) defines empowerment therefore as

*“... the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them.” (Kabeer, 2001:19)*

Empowerment as a concept and as an agenda has been reframed and gained increasing acceptance among governments and development agencies as an important vehicle for poverty alleviation among other goals. In the conventional mainstream development discourse the concept of empowerment has been used largely removed from the original feminist agenda and it has become a fashionable term in development circles that is perceived as

*“...participation in decision making’, ‘increased access to productive resources...” (Bisnath and Elson, 2000:1)*

In this context, though empowerment is not exclusively stated as a goal of Kitui Agricultural Project, it is strongly implied as coming through participatory approaches, which as stated in Parpart (2000:6) are perceived as the solution to past development failures and keys to a more equitable and sustainable future. It is taken for granted by the project that a participatory project cycle with demand driven activities will lead to empowerment by increasing the independence, awareness, self-

reliance and capacity of marginalized people. However, whether this happens and how it happens is an important issue that will be brought up in this paper.

### **2.3 Participation**

The term participation is a broad one that has been used in a number of different ways by development agencies and government bodies. It is used by people of different ideological positions who give it different meanings.

According to Cohen and Uphoff (1980:218) the dimensions of participation concern the kinds of participation taking place, the sets of individuals who are involved in participatory processes and the features of how the process is occurring.

For the purposes of this paper, I will concentrate on the first dimension of participation that dwells with the kinds of participation as stated in Cohen and Uphoff (1980:219,220,221)

Participation in decision making:

According to Cohen and Uphoff (1980:220), participation in decision making is what political scientists most often refer to when they think of participation.

*“...[it] centres on the generation of ideas, formulation and assessment of options, and making choices about them, as well as the formulation of plans for putting selected options into effect.”* (Cohen and Uphoff, 1980:220)

Cohen and Uphoff (1980:220) distinguish three types of decisions:

1. Initial decisions
2. Ongoing decisions
3. Operational decisions

Initial decisions are concerned with the identification of local need and how they will be approached through the project. Ongoing decisions may be asked of people who did not participate in the initial decisions and may be even more critical to project success while operational decisions relate to local organizations which have been established in an effort to involve people in the delivery of project inputs. (Cohen and Uphoff, 1980:220)

Participation in implementation:

Cohen and Uphoff (1980:220) state that this is the kind of participation that administrators are likely to focus on. There are three principle ways that rural people can participate in implementation:

1. Resource contribution
2. Project administration and coordination
3. Enlistment activities

In implementation participation through resource contribution, communities provide labour, cash, material goods and information.

*“Through such participation, local people lend their labour to the digging of wells, the giving of land for the construction of a health station, the donation of tools for working on a local road, the donation of money for the financing of community grain storage bins or the provision of crucial information on such topics as crop yields, tenure arrangement, pest problems, sources of nutrition...”* (Cohen and Uphoff, 1980:220).

In implementation participation through project administration and coordination rural people

*“...can participate as either locally hired employees or as members of various project advisory or decision making boards. They can also be members of voluntary associations who are playing a role in coordinating their activities with those of the project”* (Cohen and Uphoff, 1980:220)

According to Cohen and Uphoff, (1980:221), participation in implementation through enlistment in programmes is the third and most common one. This they state is best distinguished through the benefits that are likely to accrue from the enlistment.

Participation in benefits:

Cohen and Uphoff (1980:221) distinguish three kinds of benefits that may be accrued.

1. Material benefits
2. Social benefits
3. Personal benefits

Material benefits or private goods that are

*“...summarized as an increase in consumption, income, assets. Consumption increases can result from higher yields of food grain, and income benefits can result from the sale of surplus production. Increased assets can be seen in the acquisition of land, livestock, implements, improved farm dwellings, savings...”*

Social benefits or public goods that are

*“... usually characterized as services or amenities such as schools, health clinics, water systems, improved housing and better roads. ...as efforts are increased to improve the ‘quality of life’ for poorer sections of the population, there will be more need to assess participation in such benefits. Particular attention should be given to the amount, distribution and quality of these services and amenities.”*

Personal benefits that are

*“... usually greatly desired though often not attained on an individual basis, coming rather to members of groups or sectors as these acquire more social and political power through the operation of a project. ... Among several possible project-generated benefits of this sort, three kinds appear particularly important: self esteem, political power and sense of efficacy.”*

In addition to these three dimensions of participation, there are two distinctions made on the term participation:

1. Participation as a means
2. Participation as an end

Participation as a means:

This according to Nelson and Wright (2000:1) is so as

*“...to accomplish the aims of a project more efficiently, effectively and cheaply”*

In a recent UNDP article this sort of participation is seen as a process whereby local people cooperate with externally introduced development programmes or projects and it becomes the means by which such initiatives can be implemented more effectively.<sup>2</sup> Efficiency in this case can be seen to be improved if participation involves the

<sup>2</sup> [www.undp.org/sl/Overview/participation\\_and\\_empowerment.htm](http://www.undp.org/sl/Overview/participation_and_empowerment.htm) Downloaded on 10/09/2001

beneficiaries contributing their own labour and other resources such as time and money. According to Lane (2000:183), here participation is seen as an input into development projects and there is optimism about the link between project success and the extent of participation.

Participation as an end:

Nelson and Wright (2000:1) view this as

*“...where the community or group sets up a process to control its own development”*

Participation is viewed as a goal in itself. This goal is expressed as the empowering of people in terms of their acquiring the skills, knowledge and experience to take greater responsibility for their development. Since people's poverty can be explained in terms of their exclusion and lack of access to and control of the resources they need to sustain and improve their lives, participation is seen as an instrument that can change that exclusion and provide poor people with the basis for more direct involvement in development initiatives.<sup>3</sup> In this case, participation is wider in scope, has greater intensity (Lane, 2000:183), and is seen to increase people's sense of power through self-esteem and confidence.

According to Nelson and Wright (2000:1), these two forms of participation imply very different power relationships between members of a community as well as between them and development agencies and the state. Consequently the empowerment potential of these two types of participation is also different with the latter being more empowering to local populations than the former.

### *2.3.1 Participation as empowerment*

The relationship between participation and power is now widely recognized. According to Guijt and Shah ((1998:1), the assumption is that participatory approaches empower local people with the skills and confidence to analyze their situation, reach consensus, make decisions and take action, so as to improve their circumstances.

---

<sup>3</sup> [www.undp.org/si/Overview/participation\\_and\\_empowerment.htm](http://www.undp.org/si/Overview/participation_and_empowerment.htm) downloaded on 10/09/2001

However, they further assert that

*“...in many cases where participation has been pursued something is going wrong. Despite the stated intentions in social inclusion, it has become clear that many participatory development initiatives do not deal well with the complexity of community differences, including age, economic, religious, caste, ethnic and, in particular gender. ...it is apparent that ‘community’ has often been viewed naively, or in practice dealt with, as an harmonious and internally equitable collective.”*

The tendency not to acknowledge the complexity of social and power relations makes the language of participation suspect as far as its perception of the needs, interests and contributions to development of poor women and other less powerful members of communities are concerned.

Another factor according to Guijt and Shah ((1998:9) is the aspect of participation being used in a normative sense

*“... whereby anything participatory is assumed to synonymous with ‘good’ and ‘empowering’. Participation has often been used to describe very rudimentary levels of consultation between agency staff and community members. Some critics have also likened it to a Trojan Horse that can hide manipulation and even coercion under a cloak of social palatability.”*

This way gender issues have a tendency of disappearing, as they are perceived to be included in this ‘good’ practice. For empowerment to grow out of this participation, there has to be an acknowledgement of intra communal struggles that also include gender relations and the will to follow through consultation with analysis of causes of oppression and action to redress the causes (Guijt and Shah 1998:9).

In my view and based on the analysis of Cohen and Uphoff (1980), Nelson and Wright (2000) as well as Guijt and Shah (1998) participation comes closest to empowerment if it moves beyond merely involving local communities in planning, implementation and monitoring thereby being a means to achieve efficiency, and encompasses the aspect of different categories of poor people being able to make choices and real decisions as well as control their self determination.

The perception of participation as empowerment in the context of Kitui Agricultural Project is gender neutral and geared towards the poor as a category with the rationale that demand driven initiatives would allow and enable the ‘community’ to be involved in the development process. Consequently, the issues that emerge from this notion of participation as empowerment are how it discerns poor women, where they are located in these participatory processes of the project cycle and what levels of empowerment can be reached by such participatory processes in so far as poor women’s needs, interests and contributions are concerned.

#### **2.4 Gender and policy options**

According to Kabeer (1994:81),

*“We use the term ‘gender blind’ to refer to policies which while often appearing neutral (they are couched in abstract, generic categories such as communities, labour force, the poor, etc), are implicitly male biased, because they are premised on the notion of a male actor and men’s needs and interests”.*

In a later article, Kabeer (1999:39) elaborates

*“...gender-blindness of past policy reflected particular assumptions about biological difference and cultural determinism which allowed policy makers to perceive men as the key development actors and to privilege their needs, interests and priorities in the way that they designed policy”*

Accordingly, to Kabeer (1999:33), efforts to make development policy more gender aware have been fuelled by two different, though not necessarily incompatible types of considerations:

1. Integrationist tactics
2. Transformative strategies

Integrationist tactics:

*“Integrationist advocacy has sought to emphasize how a concern with the advancement of women can contribute to the achievement of agendas set by those who may have no particular concern with women’s needs and interests. ... [it is] an attempt to shift the basis of claims on behalf of women from earlier emphasis on need, always a more discretionary form of claim and one most*

*easily ignored in situations of competing claims, to an emphasis on merit, which attempts to redefine the basis of women's claims in terms which are compatible with institutional priorities"*

She further states that its advantage is the short-term pay off though its achievement is likely to be confined within predetermined parameters set by institutional rules.

Integrationist tactics according to Kabeer (1999:34), were a response to the marginalized status given to women prior to the advent of WID, whereby development efforts in addition to being driven by economic growth focused on men and identified them as the key economic agents while welfare efforts were focused on women in their familial roles as mothers, wives and dependants.

Integrationist efforts as identified by Kabeer (1999:35) can be seen in the *anti poverty approach*, which seeks to demonstrate that women were predominantly present in the ranks of the very poor, and in the *efficiency approach* which stresses the critical significance of women's economic contribution in any effort to maximize returns to economic growth.

Transformative strategies:

*"Transformative advocacy is based on the recognition by some gender advocates that in male-dominated organizations, 'the rules of the game' are likely to throw up notions of merit which are loaded against women. [They] are more politically ambitious because they are about changing the rules, rather than playing by them. In development terms, they go beyond seeking to integrate gender issues into the development agenda and seek to transform the agenda and broaden its goals to enable it to address issues of social justice."*

(Kabeer, 1999:34)

She further points out that these strategies aspire to give women a greater role in setting the agenda in the first place and are more radical in nature as they require challenging established ways of thinking.

Transformative efforts as identified in Kabeer (1999:36,38), can be seen in the form of the demand for *equity* as advocated by early WID advocates, who sought for equality of opportunity for women in the development process and in the more recent *empowerment approach*, which seeks to bring about changes in the distribution of

material and symbolic resources as well as opportunities between men and women within the development process.

Consequently policy formulation requires greater awareness and a realization that the outcomes of development interventions may have differentiated impact not only in terms of gender but also according to other classifications such as race, class and nationality.

Kabeer (1994: 81, 1999: 39) states that greater gender awareness can be translated into policy approaches in a number of different ways.

*“...based on the recognition that development actors are women as well as men, that men and women are constrained by different, and often unequal ways, as potential participants and as beneficiaries in the development process and that they may consequently have differing and sometimes conflicting needs, interests and priorities”*

These policy interventions will normally be differentiated by whether they seek to achieve an integrationist or transformative goal

Gender neutral policies:

These types of policies rely on accurate information about the existing gender-based division of resources and responsibilities. (Kabeer, 1994:81)

They are

*“...based on the idea that an accurate assessment of the existing gender division of resources and responsibilities will ensure that policy objectives are met as effectively as possible within a given context. In countries where there is a significant tradition of independent female farming, a gender-neutral agricultural policy aimed at improving agricultural productivity would design its extension services to reach both sets of farmers. (Kabeer, 1999:40,41)*

She further postulates that gender neutral policies have often been advocated from within integrationist frameworks, reflecting an improved informational basis but not greater political awareness. These policies do not seek to challenge the existing status quo and in most cases leave it intact. They are more preoccupied with achieving policy objectives rather than challenging the existing state of affairs.

In my view, while Kabeer (1994,1999) seems to lack clarity on the difference between gender blind and gender neutral policies, I think that the important difference lies in what is assumed, what is implied by the targeting of the policy. Gender neutrality in policy here, while not being completely positive, is viewed as an important step forward because it is based on the recognition of the different roles, resources and responsibilities of both men and women. Gender neutral policies are in actual reality more informed though not necessarily more politically aware.

Gender specific policies:

These policies favour targeting activities and resources which women are likely to control or benefit from. (Kabeer, 1994:81)

They too can be the result of integrationist advocacy and are

*“...intended to target and benefit a specific gender in order to achieve certain policy goals or to meet certain gender specific needs more effectively. This category of policies differs radically from the older gender stereotyping, which targeted men for production-related interventions and women for welfare-related interventions, if it is based on an accurate analysis of the prevailing division of labour, responsibilities and needs rather than on planners biases and preconceptions. ... Home based income-generating projects for women in societies where strict norms of female seclusion are observed, with related restrictions on women’s mobility, may be the appropriate and gender-specific responses to objective constraints. (Kabeer, 1999:41,42)*

These policies however, also do not challenge the existing division of resources and responsibilities unless some element of transformative potential is built into them. In this case Kabeer (1999:42) indicates that they can be thrown up by transformative advocacy that seeks to address not the manifestations of gender inequality but also their underlying causes.

Gender redistributive/transformative policies:

*“These seek to transform existing gender relations in a more democratic direction by redistributing more evenly the division of resources and responsibilities, and power between women and men. ” ( Kabeer, 1994:81)*

These policies according to Kabeer (1999:44) are the most politically challenging, as they require that men give up certain privileges and take on certain responsibilities to achieve greater equity in the development process. They are consequently the most empowering to women. An example is land reform geared explicitly towards women. These sort of policies however go largely unsupported by governments and international development agencies as observed by Goetz (1997:6)

*"Gender redistributive policies have characteristics which tend to create resistance and opposition within the organizational and broader institutional environment "*

This is mainly because their agenda is political and seems to threaten the status quo.

It is my opinion that there exists a clear danger in Kabeer (1994,1999) of reducing gender to women only. This reductionist view will tend to relegate women to former welfare thinking that viewed them as a special category needing special attention, as well as ignore the crucial factor that gender is about the social relations between men and women.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The theoretical framework defined above will assist in the revealing the different ways women are viewed in development. It has discussed the different policy approaches towards low income third world women, indicating the conceptual shifts from Women in Development to Gender and Development that have taken place over time and how they position women in the development agenda. From the initial welfare thinking, through equity, antipoverty, efficiency and empowerment, we have seen how these approaches are defined and used and their underlying assumptions. The theoretical framework has gone in detail on empowerment as an approach emanating from the third world itself and its current connection to the concept of participation and how this may have implications on certain categories of people like poor rural women. Finally it has discussed gender policy options and how their intention can either be to integrate women into the development agenda or to transform existing social inequalities between men and women. It has elaborated on the outcomes of gender awareness in policy showing that it can lead to gender neutral, gender specific and gender transformative policies.

While I am well aware that the two frameworks of Moser (1989) and Kabeer (1994,1999) emanate from different thinking, I will attempt to 'marry' them in the next chapter in order to illustrate the possible link between the two frameworks and subsequently to indicate how the policy underlying the project conceptualizes gender and gender issues.

## **CHAPTER THREE: Thinking about Policy: Over view of the policy and programme context of Kitui Agricultural Project**

### **3.1 *Introduction***

This chapter will focus on the analysis of some of the policy documents that inform the Kitui Agricultural Project. Sections of the policy documents that are relevant to the ASAL project as well as the Project Document will be outlined in the chapter for content analysis. Various kinds of policy approaches can and will be distinguished from these documents. Using the Moser (1989) and Kabeer (1994,1999) frameworks discussed in the previous chapter, they will be grouped in a logical sequence in terms of welfare, antipoverty, equity and efficiency approaches for the purpose of analysis for their level of gender awareness in an attempt to arrive at a conclusion and answer the first research question on the conceptualization of gender and gender issues at the programme and policy levels of Kitui Agricultural Project.

The Kitui Agricultural Project is embedded in a number of policy documents. Four of these documents and the Project Document that guides the project are outlined and analyzed in this chapter.

#### **1. *The District Focus for Rural Development Strategy (1983)***

This document (also known as the ‘blue book’) has been in use in the whole of Kenya since 1983 as a framework to the decentralized planning and implementation of rural development projects. The document outlines the manner in which planning and implementation will take place at district level, the responsibilities of the ministries as well as the resources available for rural development. Its most critical aspect is the outlining of the development committees that will guide rural development from the level of the sub location to that of the district.

#### **2. *The Development Policy for Arid and Semi Arid Lands (1992)***

This document has been in use since 1992, providing a framework for planning and implementation of project and programmes in Arid and Semi Arid Lands. With the Arid and Semi Arid Lands carrying well over 20% of the population and 50% of the country’s livestock, it was felt that they were not receiving adequate attention in terms of resources. This policy document was based on lessons learnt and focused on

possible well-coordinated, multi-sectoral development interventions towards the Arid and Semi Arid Lands.

*3. The National Development Plan (1997 – 2001)*

This is the general country plan for the current five-year period. It is designed as a launching pad for all development activity in the Kenya and addresses all sectors of the economy.

*4. The National Poverty Eradication Plan (1999 – 2015)*

This document is designed using Participatory Poverty Assessments as framework on how the country will tackle poverty in a fifteen-year period. With the rising incidence of poverty in Kenya from the late eighties, it was felt that this plan would be a bridge between the macro nature of national development plans and the needs of the poor. This document was prepared in consultation with the IMF and touches on all sectors of the Kenyan economy. Its relevance has been acknowledged by all development initiatives in the country that are geared towards poverty reduction.

*5. Agricultural Support Project in the Arid and Semi Arid Lands of Kitui, Makueni, Taita-Taveta and Kwale including the Project Coordination Unit (1999)*

This document was designed out of a dialogue between the Government of Kenya and Danida as the guide to project intervention in the four Arid and Semi Arid Land districts funded by the Danish government. By way of a logframe it outlines the programme objectives, expected outputs, activities and inputs by both the Government of Kenya and Danida. It is in essence the document that the project bases its progress upon.

### **3.2 ‘Gender Blindness’ in policy at the beginning**

The policy of District Focus for Rural Development, which became officially operational in 1983, became the guide to the decentralization of rural planning and implementation from the headquarters to the district level. Based on a complementary relationship between the ministry headquarters with their sectoral approach to development and the districts with their integrated approach to addressing local needs, the importance of the ‘Blue Book’ to Kitui Agricultural Project lies in the fact that it is the guide to the selection of projects and project areas (referred to as Focal Development Areas).

As discussed in chapter two, the term ‘ gender blind’ as stated in Kabeer (1994:81), refers to policies which appear neutral but are implicitly male biased because they are based on an underlying notion of a male actor, male needs and interests. These policies perceive men as the key development actors and consequently privilege their needs, interests and priorities. (Kabeer, 1999:39)

The District Focus for Rural Development Strategy document is one such policy document that can be inferred to as gender blind. While containing inferences and references to categories such as ‘local target population’, ‘area residents’, ‘informed citizenry’ and ‘local people’, the underlying implication in my knowledge is that these will most likely be men. This is because they are the ones most likely to be present in the committees, as well as likely to be opinion leaders and more informed especially in a rural setting.

Feminists have long acknowledged that concepts such as these are socially constructed and are loaded with different types of social meanings. One particular concept that has been deconstructed by feminist thought is ‘citizenship’. According to Lennie (1999:101-102),

*“...the meaning of ‘citizen’ is constructed from the attributes, capacities and activities associated with men. These include independence, the ability to reason and the capacity of people to participate as ‘free individuals’ who are social equals. ”*

Due to its gender blindness, this document assumes away the gendered outcomes of development interventions with a tendency for men to have an advantage over women due to the existing unequal relations between them. The impact of these categorizations on the project will often be that poor women and other less powerful members of society will tend to be partially or completely subsumed as far as participation in the selection of projects and project areas is concerned. This aspect is further discussed in the next chapter on the project cycle.

### **3.3    *The awakening in policy***

#### **3.3.1    *Welfare policy approach***

This policy approach has been described as focusing on women as passive recipients of development whose most recognized role is their reproductive role. Often the problem is assumed to be women rather than the lack of resources and family welfare

is viewed as their core concern (Moser, 1989:1809). Indeed welfare policy approaches have been described as casting women as non-productive dependants whose only concerns lie within their engendered position. (Kabeer, 1994:83)

In the Development Policy for Arid and Semi Arid Lands it is stated that

*“In designing projects that provide social amenities, focus should be drawn to groups within the community that are most vulnerable to suffering the effects of ASAL conditions. The ASAL groups that suffer great disadvantages are women, children and the nomads of particular Agro-ecological zones.”*

(Development Policy for Arid and Semi Arid Lands, 1992:9)

As regards women, I view this as a gender specific welfare policy prescription whereby they are viewed as a vulnerable group that needs special attention and are often lumped up with other disadvantaged categories of people in society. While in the context of Kitui Agricultural Project women may indeed be viewed as a special disadvantaged category, many welfare projects like family planning and food aid do not fit in neatly with its agenda. This is because the project as an agricultural one sees its mandate as the improvement of living standards through sustainable agriculture and women's productive role in agriculture is recognized as crucial to this development.

The activities that do seem fit into this approach are water structures, energy saving devices and home economics training and sensitization. In both water structures and energy saving devices, women are expected to participate in the construction of these units while in home economics training they are trained on home management, food and nutrition and sanitation. However, the water structures and energy saving devices carry the additional aspect of a cash cost sharing of 5% to 50% and 25% respectively thus what was earlier provided for free now has to be paid for. This is in line with the general shift from welfare to efficiency that has affected many such projects. It is therefore the case in my view, that the welfare aspect is no longer relevant in the activities of Kitui Agricultural Project.

### *3.3.2 Anti-poverty policy approach*

This policy approach has been described as one that recognizes women's productive role. Ways are sought to get poor women out of poverty and to increase their productive role in order to impact on underdevelopment.

It is noted that the antipoverty approach to policy seems to be by far the most used at both policy and programme levels. It fits in well with the project agenda that is targeted at low income farmers and whereby the goal is to improve their standard of living.

The Development Policy for Arid and Semi Arid Lands (1992) states that

*"Incidents of female-headed households are common in the ASAL particularly in some agro ecological zones. ... the families are susceptible to frequent famines and a vicious cycle of poverty.*

*More attention will be paid to helping women in their daily work of providing the basic services such as water near the homes and by providing training in basic skills and attitude necessary for a better well being.*

*Women's groups can provide an opportunity for women to assist each other in the development process. In some ASALs the delivery of programme packages to women's groups would be an efficient and effective means of promoting local and national development. " (Development Policy for Arid and Semi Arid Lands, 1992:2,79-80)*

At the same time the National Poverty Eradication Plan (1999) maintains that

*"A household's inadequate access to water can have major adverse consequences on the length and hardship of a poor woman's working day. In setting sector delivery targets for safe water the key social indicator for achievement will be the impact on women's workload.*

*Women bear a disproportionately large share of domestic and agriculture work. [with] working days [on] average two hours longer than those of rural men. Their contribution to family farm income is usually considerable; ... planting, weeding, cultivating and food crop harvesting ... child care, housework, wood and water collection and food preparation – none or few of which create cash incomes.*

*Over a quarter of all rural households are headed by women and so they are the key domestic and in many cases also farm managers and contributors of farm family labour. This...requires that the policy and programme interventions are cross cutting and multi dimensional. Single stranded sector planning - for example, in agriculture alone or health care alone - will misdiagnose the key priorities and dynamics in poverty eradication."*

(National Poverty Eradication Plan, 1999:55,64-65)

The Project Document further elaborates on this issue by stating that

*“In the ASAL areas women perform 75% of the farming. ... men who are not only responsible for all the major decisions in the family but also own most land are frequently absent.*

*However extension services have to try to address female farmers directly.*

*...the rotating savings and credit associations (ROSCAs) or “merry go round”*

*... which some women’s groups in the ASAL have started up... can be useful in supplying credit for small production activities....*

*Water supply for domestic and livestock purposes is of the highest priority to communities in the ASAL area,.... People – especially women – spend considerable time and energy fetching water, leaving less time for productive activities like agriculture. Rural water supply has therefore formed a significant component of the previous support.” (Agricultural Support Project in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands Districts of Kitui, Makueni, Taita Taveta and Kwale including the Project Coordination Unit, 1999:16,17,18,22,23)*

I view this policy statements as generally gender specific but with strong gender neutral undertones as well. As concerns women, they are integrationist in nature, designed to bring poor women into the mainstream development agenda. Several factors are being identified as the cause for female poverty that need to be addressed.

These are:

1. Female headedness
2. Access to productive resources
3. Access to basic social services

It is assumed that female headedness leads to the poverty of women. It is further assumed that providing these female-headed households with benefits will impact positively on poverty eradication and even gender equity. However, as mentioned in Jackson (1996:491), there are arguments that indicate that it is a fallacy to assume that women’s subordination necessarily derives from poverty and will therefore be eradicated by anti-poverty programmes.

Jackson (1996:492) further points out that the assumption that all women headed households are poor is often misleading and ignores the fact that lone parenthood for women could also mean improvement in decision making and even living standards.

In addition to this, the prominence assigned to female headedness as a sign of poverty over-emphasizes the situation of the household head at the expense of the individuals within the household and intra household poverty. This gives credence to the assumption that the situation of the household head is representative of all within the household.

The second factor is access to productive resources like credit that could generate an income for women. This notion assumes away the structures that inhibit access to ownership of productive resources. It also ignores the fact that access and ownership do not necessarily mean control over the resource or its products. In addition, even with ownership of productive resources guaranteed, there are cultural ideologies that perpetuate the devaluing of women's productivity in ways that keep them subordinated.

Closely related and tied to access to basic social services is the issue of women's heavy workloads, which is seen as resulting from their lack of access to these services. It is widely acknowledged that women bear a disproportionate share of the workload because of their triple roles of production, reproduction and community care. Their burdens will be reduced though not entirely eliminated by the provision of basic social services, as this does not necessarily change the sexual division of labour nor does it challenge the basic tenets that keep women subordinated.

However, this being the approach underlying Kitui Agricultural project, most activities are poverty oriented though not necessarily targeted at women only. The target is low income 'farmers', the 'community'. Feminists have questioned the notion of 'community' as it has a tendency that

*'... favours the opinions and priorities of those with more power and ability to voice themselves publicly. In particular there is a minimal consideration of gender issues and inadequate involvement of women.' (Guitt & Shah: 1998:1)*

In addressing the 'community' or 'farmers', this anti poverty approach as taken up by the project often obscures the internal dynamics and differences within communities and may end up concealing poor women and other weaker members of society. This issue is tackled further in the next chapter that addresses the project cycle.

Based on the above arguments and the fact that all activities undertaken by the project are now heavily cost shared in cash, I am of the opinion that the anti poverty approach is not being fully practiced but has become mere rhetoric in so far as women are concerned.

### *3.3.3 Equity policy approach*

This policy approach acknowledges women's active involvement in development. It has often been viewed as posing a real threat to male privilege and has gone largely unsupported by governments and development agencies.

The Development Policy for Arid and Semi Arid Lands (1992) however does still state that

*"A related problem has been the issuing of land titles in the name of the husband only. Land boards have not been instructed to obtain the family's consent to land transfers. Further measures to improve equity in land rights are likely to increase the prospects for the introduction of sustainable land use systems.*

*Women face particular problems in establishing small business enterprises including limited access to credit, legal constraints and the inappropriate design of women's entrepreneurship programmes" (Development Policy for Arid and Semi Arid Lands, 1992:40, 63-64)*

Further support is offered by the National Poverty Eradication Plan (1999) in its acknowledgement that

*"Widows, divorced and separated wives are especially vulnerable to the loss of land rights.... The government will undertake most of the outstanding land reforms by 2002 to ensure land rights for women." (National Poverty Eradication Plan, 1999:67)*

This issue is also elaborated by the Project Document though no recommendations are forthcoming.

*“...it is the men who hold customary rights to land, and ownership is passed from father to son. ... These culturally determined on going land adjudication process acknowledges property rights, where titles to land are almost exclusively issued to men.*

*With the frequently absent man being the owner of the land and decision-maker and the woman being de facto responsible for both land cultivation and management, it is often the case that women find themselves having difficulties implementing the activities recommended by the extension services.”* (Agricultural Support Project in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands Districts of Kitui, Makueni, Taita Taveta and Kwale including the Project

As concerns women, though these are mainly gender specific equity policy statements, they have a strong gender transformative agenda and potential. The locus of women's vulnerability in this case is seen to lie in their inequality with men in terms of access. Women's triple roles are acknowledged as a factor in this unequal state of affairs and the state is expected to put in place mechanisms that reduce the inequality between men and women – in this particular case on the aspect of land ownership. There is however, some doubt as to whether land titles can be issued to wives exclusively or to other members of the family since familial relations do have diverse interests according to gender and generation. Hidden in and crucial to this is also the issue of inheritance practices, which in this case are inherently patrilineal. It seems to me that the policies do to some extent see the need for equity. Nevertheless, there are practical problems in implementation, especially of land related issues, due to cultural and structural aspects and resistance. Therefore, there is no clear and simple way to implement land related issues that can directly benefit women unless there is a strong political force and will to pull it through.

### **3.3.4 Efficiency policy approach**

The shift to neoliberal thinking has influenced the current move towards and increasing popularity of efficiency policies. These policies seek to ensure development through the effective economic contribution of women.

The National Development Plan (1997) states that

*"More resources will be directed to individual women at grassroots levels who have potential to manage industrial enterprises.*

*Training programmes for women's groups will be mounted in the areas of entrepreneurship, with emphasis on quality and product diversification."*

(National Development Plan, 1997:200-201)

At the same time the Project Document seeks a situation whereby

*"The FDA approach will be analyzed and documented jointly with the men and women in the target communities. The main areas to be considered are the efficiency of the unified gender responsive system, the viability of community organization, the workings of the cost sharing process and replicability in a national context. A key indicator must be the level of requests by the farmers for support from the extensionists – especially once the farmers are making a real contribution to the cost of these services."*

(Agricultural Support Project in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands Districts of Kitui, Makueni, Taita Taveta and Kwale including the Project Coordination Unit, 1999:30,46)

I tend to think that there is increasingly a tendency towards statements with efficiency undertones. These policies are both gender-neutral and specific and integrationist in nature whereby women's improved efficiency is viewed as crucial for development. Here it is expected that women will not only undertake their reproductive roles but also undertake productive ones like small-scale enterprises and other informal sector activities efficiently. All support that is given to women in these areas is geared at making them more productive and therefore meet overall developmental objectives. As has been mentioned earlier in the case of cost sharing for water structures, we see

that the current move is towards efficiency and productivity and as a result the commodification of natural resources. It seems to me that while the economic empowerment of women that is envisaged in this efficiency prone agenda may be a positive aspect, often it does not challenge the basis for their subordination.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

The table below indicates how some of the policies underlying Kitui Agricultural Project would look placed in a table that combines Moser's (1989) and Kabeer's (1994,1999) frameworks.

As can be deduced from the table, the policy and programme context of Kitui Agricultural Project conceptualizes gender and gender issues in a mostly integrationist manner. The gender transformative potential, while in existence, is quite minimal and mainly in respect to the issue of land. The practical problems associated with pulling this off can not be overemphasized either, as there are cultural and structural resistances when it comes to land as an important resource and the basis for a rural livelihood. Empowerment processes which are the most gender transformative in nature in their attempt to bring about changes in distribution of material and symbolic resources as well as in beliefs and values that constrain the capacity to exercise agency are missing in the policy and programme background of the project. Indeed empowerment only comes out at project level in connection to participation, which in itself carries assumptions that can be deconstructed and shown to be misleading and faulty.

In addition to this situation, gender and gender issues in the policy statements in many cases tend to be seen as synonymous to women issues and this has repercussions on women in that the crucial social and power relations between them and men that are so central to women's subordination will tend to be ignored. Cornwall (2000:25) puts it concretely when she states that

*"If, as is most frequently the case, 'gender' refers to 'women issues', it would not be surprising to see findings concerning women's access to resources, perhaps some dimensions of institutionalized disprivilege, and suggestions regarding interventions like women's groups or the provision of credit"*

This describes perfectly the policy prescriptions which Kitui Agricultural Project relies on and it is no wonder that crucial gender transformatory issues based on empowerment processes will be relegated to the background.

I think that in the case of Kitui Agricultural Project, as long as there is no concrete backing in the policy and programme context for real gender transformation and as long as gender is equated to women, the intention to pay attention to gender will remain just that – an intention in the form of policy statements.

## APPEARANCE OF POLICY IN KITUI AGRICULTURAL PROJECT

Goal	Reductionist tactics	Integrationist tactics		Transformative strategies	
Policy approach	Welfare Approach	Anti poverty Approach	Efficiency Approach	Equity Approach	Empowerment Approach
<b>Gender Neutral Policies</b>	NONE	Targeting of project benefits to low-income 'farmers' and their families in the agricultural communities	Extension support to 'farmers' especially if they make a real contribution to the cost of these services	NONE	NONE
<b>Gender Specific Policies</b>	Design of projects geared towards vulnerable groups like women	Supply of credit for small production activities to women groups	Resources directed to individual women with entrepreneurial potential	Access to credit and removal of legal constraints for women's entrepreneurship activities	NONE
<b>Gender Transformative Policies</b>	NONE	NONE	NONE	Land reforms by state to ensure issuing of land titles to women	NONE

This chapter has discussed some of the policy prescriptions under which Kitui Agricultural Project operates and their gender implications. The next chapter will dwell on how some of these policies are implemented and adopted in the participatory project cycle of KAP.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: The participatory project cycle of Kitui Agricultural Project**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter will make an analysis of the participatory project cycle of Kitui Agricultural Project in an endeavor to answer the second and third research questions. Based on the conceptual framework in chapter two of Empowerment, Participation and their assumed inter-linkage, it will determine the manner in which women are located in and the dynamics of their inclusion into the participatory project cycle and activities as well as discuss the implications of participation on the empowerment of poor rural women as practiced by the project.

The approach of Kitui Agricultural Project and ASP as a whole is a participatory process known as the Focal Development Area (FDA) approach (refer to Appendix I). The selected areas are usually the size of a sub location with a target population of approximately 5000 per unit. It is a participatory and demand driven process by which local communities are facilitated to organize themselves for the purpose of undertaking various development activities to better their own lives. As stated in the guidelines

*“These development activities include undertaking needs assessment, planning, implementing and monitoring their own development undertakings, thereby taking joint responsibility for their own development efforts.”*  
(Guidelines for community based development activities in ASAL areas, 2001:1)

The participatory nature of the project cycle is expected to assist in bringing about a sense of responsibility hence sustainability as well as empowerment to local populations (including women) by increasing their ability to take decisions and make choices on issues that concern their well being.

### **4.2 The project cycle of Kitui Agricultural Project**

The project cycle of Kitui Agricultural Project involves the following steps; Identification of FDA, Needs assessment (PRA), Baseline survey, Development planning (LFA), Implementation, Monitoring and Information, Impact assessment,

and Weaning off Focal Development Areas. Using the same format, I will discuss and analyze community participation in the project cycle and comment on what this participation may entail as concerns the empowerment of poor rural women.

#### *4.2.1 Project/FDA identification*

At this stage the appropriate area of intervention or the Focal Development Area is selected. The selection process is modeled along the District Focus for Rural Development Strategy (DFRDS) through a setup of development committees that exist from the sub location to the district level. The selection begins at the sub locational development committee, proceeds to the locational development committee, then divisional development committee and finally the district development committee approves the suggestions from the lower level committees. Sitting in these committees are representatives of the local people as well as government officers at the various levels.

As has been discussed and argued earlier, the DFRDS is a gender blind document that contains concepts that subsume poor women and other less powerful members of society. I think that it assumes that social relations are equal and that all people will be able to participate in the selection of development areas and planning of activities on an equal footing.

The composition of these committees is pre-specified in the “blue book” and is mainly dominated by men who are the local leaders and key decision-makers in Kitui. Therefore, there is, according to me, an additional effect that poor women with their responsibilities as care givers and other members of the community who are not considered as opinion leaders will tend to be excluded from the arena where decisions are made on the areas of intervention and the projects that are of priority to the community.

Further to this situation, some general criteria are fed to the committees by the project to guide them in the selection process. The first and most critical of these is that

*“The candidate sub-location’s community should be prepared and willing to participate in the project under the various conditions such as cost sharing, community participation etc.”* (Guidelines for community based development activities in ASAL areas, 2001:7)

Women having less productive resources than men, tend to be less active in the area of cost sharing and due to their time constraints also in community participation. It is often the case that the areas selected based on these criteria are the better off areas that have a proven track record on these issues.

Another criteria for selection is that

*“The candidate sub-location should preferably be neighbouring to an existing FDA”* (Guidelines for community based development activities in ASAL areas, 2001:7)

It so happens that previous selection criteria were based on areas with higher potential in terms of agricultural production. These are also the less poor areas where male out migration tends to be less and therefore female headed households are fewer. It follows therefore that in Kitui, these areas are the ones that experience far less hardship in terms of basic social services and whereby women work burdens thereby tend to be less heavy. The poorer hard ship areas are left out in this selection by the mere fact that they do not border existing Focal Development Areas.

Based on the above arguments, I tend to think that the gender blindness of the DFRDS document, the pre-determined composition of the development committees as well as the criteria provided by the project for selection of development areas leaves serious doubt as to whether poor women’s interests are indeed represented in not only the document but also more importantly in the participatory selection processes of Kitui Agricultural Project.

#### *4.2.2 Needs Assessment (Participatory Rural Appraisal)*

The needs assessment is carried out using the Participatory Rural Appraisal. It is defined as

*“...a process of learning from the community and with the community to investigate, analyze and evaluate problems, constraints and opportunities and to make informed decisions regarding development objectives/activities.”* (Guidelines for community based development activities in ASAL areas, 2001:9)

The PRA in Kitui Agricultural project is undertaken by the government-implementing officers, who are viewed as facilitators and convenors and the ‘community’ of the

Focal Development Area. The officers are given on the job training sessions as the PRA is going on and the whole exercise is undertaken in approximately ten full days. Full participation of the 'community' is expected from this process and it is envisaged that they will be and feel involved every step of the way.

The first and crucial problematic with the PRA process concerns the government officials understanding and empathy towards the poor and especially poor women. Given the composition of the PRA team (mainly male) and the cultural ideologies on gender relations in Kitui, I find it hard to believe that a few days training on the PRA are likely to eliminate or even deter certain attitudes and assumptions towards the poor and women. This is brought out clearly in Parpart (2000:10), whereby she sees the tendency by government officials to disbelieve that the poor and especially women should have a say in policy making or programme development. Accordingly, Humble (1998:43) asserts that the line between facilitation and covert direction is a fine one and there is a possibility that facilitators can influence the agenda or priorities of local actors in many ways. Pretty and Scoones (2000:161), on their part acknowledge that fear of loss of control by government can make officials wary of flexible approaches and therefore influence the manner in which they are undertaken.

Another critical problematic with the PRA process as undertaken in Kitui Agricultural Project in my view is the amount of time and energy that is needed in order to come up with a community action plan. It is well acknowledged that the people who can attend the PRA full time are those with time to do so and these do not normally include poor rural women. According to the Human Development Report (1995), time use is identified as one of the leading poverty's facing rural women in Kenya. The PRA exercise tends not to fit with their time and schedules and it is often the case that the majority of participants in the 'community' meetings are men. As Mosse (1994:512) acknowledges women are rarely free of work responsibilities and it can be hard to find times when they would be available collectively. This is collaborated by Cornwall (2000:18) and Parpart (2000:15), in that one known barrier to women's participation is time, as the PRA has tendencies of not fitting into women's agendas.

The PRA is a public activity, taking place in a public space both physically and ideologically. Feminists have long established that the public\private divide exists in so far as activities of men and women are concerned, with men ideologically located in the public and women in the private sphere. In PRA sessions as conducted by Kitui Agricultural Project, women tend to feel exposed and therefore less free to voice their opinions because of the public nature of this activity and while some powerful women have no qualms speaking in public, many poor women will simply disappear in the background. Mosse (1994:514) sees this inaccessibility and inarticulateness of women in the public sphere not as a practical problem or even a problem of technique but as a manifestation of structural gender relations whereby these relations influence many information generating exercises. Just as Cornwall (2000:18) asserts, in PRAs as undertaken in Kitui Agricultural Project, consideration has to be made to the gendered nature of institutional spaces so as to make women and especially poor women feel more comfortable.

As is indicated by the word, the ‘community’ action plans that are the final product of the PRA process are not gender specific but are viewed as belonging to the whole sub-location as if only one world view exists. It is acknowledged that there is a subsumption of the knowledge and interests of less powerful groups in society under terms such as ‘community’. In Kitui as in many other areas, women tend to be less represented among those ‘who know’ or the opinion leaders in communities. It is therefore the case that their interests may not emerge fully if at all in the ‘community’ action plans. The PRA therefore, by its tendency of assuming that communities are homogenous, can and does reinforce existing social hierarchies and especially gender hierarchies with a tendency for the less powerful in society coming out as the losers in the whole exercise. Guijt and Shah (1998:7) mention this as a problem of simplification whereby the inequalities, oppressive social hierarchies and discrimination are often overlooked with the assumption of cooperation and harmony. Cornwall (2000: 18) views this situation as ending up with an unquestioning focus on soliciting the participation of those who are assumed to know, or taking versions produced by the dominant as if they represent the whole.

A recent addition to the PRA in Kitui Agricultural Project has been a gender analysis tool modeled along the lines of the Harvard Gender Roles Framework. The community is divided up into men, women, boys and girls and an attempt is made to analyze gender through the division of labour, daily activity profiles, control of family assets and decision-making power and responsibility for meeting family needs. The PRA process itself is mainly gender neutral and the addition of a gender analysis tool has helped to keep gender in view. The downside is that gender is simply added on and this fails to address the relations between men and women, as the mere dividing up of communities along sexual lines is no guarantee that gender issues will become apparent. It also often the case that the use of the information gathered from the tool depends very much on the facilitator. Locke and Okali (1999:282) acknowledge that

*“...frameworks that do not go beyond documenting roles and access to and control over benefits fail to address the subtleties of the relations between men and women, the meanings attached to the various roles and benefits, and to any change in these activities”.*

Cornwall (2000:10) on her part views the separating out and categorizing women's activities (and indeed men's) as if they existed independently of social relationships, makes the frameworks produce a version of reality to serve the needs of planners.

At the end of the PRA session the community is expected to elect a Focal Development Area committee which should be gender balanced (i.e. 50% men, 50% women). This is necessary but not sufficient to bring out women's voices. Simply including women does not always have the desired effect of increasing their agency in decision making. It is often the case that women will be present but voiceless in these committees and the key decision-makers will continue to be the more powerful members of the community. Cornwall (2000:13) and Parpart (2000:12) suggest that there is no reason to assume that enabling women to have more voice in development committees will necessarily make any contribution to transforming gender relations or that it can make them heard or bring them into committee activities in a meaningful way. This is supported by Crawley (1998:28) in her claim that while women may be physically present at meetings, they often effectively withdraw from discussion and allow the men to speak. In fact, exactly as Cornwall (2000:12/13) describes it, in Kitui Agricultural Project, participation of women in development fora such as committees

can be dangerous as it gives the impression that something is being done when in actual reality fundamental issues of power are not being addressed or redressed and subsequently gender relations not being transformed.

A more recent but fundamental problematic with the community needs assessment has been the paradigm shift from anti-poverty to efficiency that falls under the neoliberal policy agenda. An example of this change of policy can be seen in Kitui Agricultural Project when responsibility for water projects that were implemented based on needs assessments is suddenly handed over to ill prepared local communities who have neither the resources nor the capacity to run them. When these projects are run down and struggling to survive, it necessarily means that the responsibility will be shifted to the household and therefore to women who are restricted by and tied down to certain caring responsibilities. It seems to me then that even when people make decisions on their needs at local level they still have to come face to face in their lives with the wider power structures. Pretty and Scoones (2000:162) state that difficulties will lie in the fact that diagnoses at local level cannot solve problems arising out of the wider political context. At the same time Parpart (2000:10) comments that emphasis on the local has encouraged participatory facilitators to ignore the impact of national and global power structures, discourses and practices. What is asserted in these critiques is relevant for Kitui Agricultural Project and often I am left with the dilemma of what impact local 'community' needs and participation can have in the face of wider global and national structures.

While the PRA as undertaken by Kitui Agricultural Project may be participatory, this participation requires time and mobility which in most case poor rural women do not have. It is imperative that existing inequalities between men and women, between women themselves, between different categories of people be recognized and taken into account if this participation is to ever impact positively on all social categories.

#### **4.2.3 Baseline Survey**

The main objective of the baseline analysis is

*"...to be able to measure the effect of the project compared to the various targets as per the Logical Framework in the Project Document and the FDA*

*Work plans.” (Guidelines for community based development activities in ASAL areas, 2001:58)*

The survey is designed in such a way that it captures information in a single numerical digit. It is based on indicators that are meant eventually to show that the standard of living of the FDA has been effectively improved by the end of the project period. Though the questionnaire seeks disaggregated data in some sections, the baseline survey is largely modeled for the household. The sample is at least 10% of the FDA population, which is determined by the number of households in the FDA.

Empirically, the over-emphasis on the household as a unit of analysis assumes away intra household relations that are based on gender and generation. It ignores that in these relations, decision making is based on power and inequality with the outcomes more favourable for some than others. In the case of Kitui Agricultural Project, the views of one person per household who in most cases tends to be the household head, are considered to be representative of the entire household and thus go unquestioned. This issue has been discussed by feminists in connection to the economic nature of the household with the argument being that the understanding of the way resources are distributed within the household is crucial to the understanding of the specific effects of poverty in any given situation (Crehan 1992:128). It had already been argued by Folbre (1986:6), that the patriarchal household cannot be treated as an undifferentiated unit of analysis as there are significant differences between the economic position of men, women and children and that the analysis of the household must be situated in a larger structural analysis of gender and age based inequalities. Elson (1993:244) also cautions against the treatment of the household as a unity thereby ignoring the cooperative conflicts and separate economic accounting units it may contain. Therefore, the baseline in Kitui Agricultural Project needs to enter into the household in order to distinguish gender and generation based patterns of work, resource control and expenditure within it.

In Kitui Agricultural Project, the households interviewed are not further disaggregated into male-headed and female-headed households. This in essence means that upon intervention, the project will not be able to capture or target the female-headed households. Indeed, no particular attention is paid to the type of household that the

outputs and activities are likely to impact on and again this is on the assumption that all the households in the sub location will benefit from planned intervention. This seems to be in stark contradiction to policy, in the anti poverty approach which lays a great emphasis on the targeting of female-headed household with the purview that this, will impact on poverty.

While the baseline in Kitui Agricultural Project is envisaged to capture information that is representative of the whole FDA, as long as its analysis is based on the household and it does not disaggregate the different types of households, it will miss out critical information on intra and inter household interaction in terms of production of goods and services as well as the production of human resources.

#### *4.2.4 Development planning workshop (Logical Framework Approach)*

The preparation of development plans for the FDA is based on the Logical Framework Approach, which is defined as

*“...a consensus seeking planning tool created for managing development processes. The LFA tool assists to link development objectives, immediate objectives, outputs, activities and inputs and allows for connecting these with assumptions, time plans, indicators and implementers...”* (Guidelines for community based development activities in ASAL areas, 2001:58)

The six-day planning session is carried out by the elected FDA committee and the government implementing officers with a view to combine bottom-up and top-down planning by creating dialogue between the two parties.

Empirically the tool is gender blind with an assumption that the outputs and activities of the project will benefit both men and women. However, in Kitui as in many other areas, because of social and power relations, there may be a tendency to pay attention to outputs and activities that are controlled by more powerful people and groups, who also happen to be the ones in a better position to contribute the cash cost sharing required for the activities. Hambly (2000:1)<sup>4</sup>, states that the conventional use of the logframe warrants critique because it is often been gender blind with insufficient attention paid to the nature of social processes behind its preparation and use. She argues that the tool has not been properly analyzed to fit a project intended to be

<sup>4</sup> [www.isnar.org/isnar/gender/hambly.htm](http://www.isnar.org/isnar/gender/hambly.htm) Downloaded on 15/12/2000

participatory in nature and therefore conscious of social equity issues like gender relations.

---

The log frame matrix itself both at project and community level in Kitui Agricultural Project has plenty of room to be made more sensitive to gender perspectives by disaggregating the outputs and the verifiable indicators. For example if the outputs for agricultural improvement are:

- Number of hectares of sunflower promotion -how many of those are in poor female- headed households.
- Numbers of farmers trained – how many men, women, young men and young women.
- Units of storage improvement facilities – how many belong to poor female-headed households.
- Farms under integrated pest control – how many belong to poor female-headed households.

According to Hambly (2000:5)<sup>5</sup>,

*“...preparation of an engendered logical framework matrix involves project planners, stakeholders and beneficiaries in analyzing gender relations and addressing questions at each level of the framework”*

I think that this sort of attention to and disaggregation of activities and outputs as well as the addressing of gender questions at each stage of the logframe will clarify and identify the distribution of benefits from the project, which is not always equal, and help to focus more on these inequalities.

#### **4.2.5 Implementation**

For Kitui Agricultural Project, implementation is supposed to involve all stakeholders from the ‘community’, extension workers, the project as well as suppliers of inputs and materials.

*“ Each activity involves a certain amount of processing: payment of cost sharing, provision of cost shared local materials, procurement of other inputs, payment of imprest for allowances and then carrying out of the actual*

---

<sup>5</sup> [www.isnar.org/isnar/gender/hambly.htm](http://www.isnar.org/isnar/gender/hambly.htm) Downloaded on 15/12/2000

*activity.” (Guidelines for community based development activities in ASAL areas, 2001:4)*

More than ever before, Kitui Agricultural Project has begun to adopt an efficiency orientation especially in the area of cost sharing for activities whereby cost sharing is viewed as an important first step towards the privatization of services (KAP Annual Work Plan and Budget 2000-2001:3). It is expected that the farmers will reach a point whereby they can request for certain economically beneficial projects and be able to pay up to 100% of the cost of the project depending on its nature and with the principle that commercially orientated activities where individual farmers benefit will carry a greater proportion of cost sharing than more socially directed activities. This cash cost sharing is over and above what the community has to provide in labour and kind and it is normally required before the activity can be implemented.

The key problematic arises from the fact that it is unlikely that women and especially poor women in Kitui, who tend to own less in terms of productive resources will be able to raise the cash cost sharing especially in highly productive activities. This generally means that they are kept within less productive activities and in some cases even what are considered as traditional women activities like small ruminants and poultry are removed from their reach. While arguing for an anti-poverty approach, there does seem to be a contradiction with cash cost sharing that seems to be creating an element of marginalization whereby the poorest strata – especially poor women – may benefit little if anything from the activities being implemented.

It is often the case in Kitui, that the only type of cost sharing poor rural women are able to provide is manual labour. In this respect there is a tendency to encourage and use women groups for participation in implementation of activities that require manual labour like terracing and tree nurseries.

*“Women’s groups will be especially targeted for the management of activities such as tree nurseries, soil conservation and low-cost water supply structures” (KAP Annual Work Plan and Budget 2000-2001:5)*

There is a double contradiction with policy on this aspect. For one the policies do point out that women groups should be targeted for sustainable and profitable activities as well as a social support base for women. They also acknowledge that

women in ASAL areas are over burdened by their roles in the productive and reproductive spheres. It seems to me then, that when rural women groups are instrumentalized in order to meet output targets, they tend to lose in terms of diminished returns to their own labour as well as the increased workload that they have to cope with. This issue has been brought out by feminists who point out the danger in the tendency to assume that women have a particular proclivity to work collectively as opposed to men who are considered to be more individualistic.

*“...the focus on women groups has shifted from an early concern with welfare to the objective of increasing the price and productivity of women’s labour in the short term as a means towards alleviating poverty. ... This instrumental objective is often combined, in name at least, with more nebulous ones concerned with ‘empowerment’.”* (Harrison 1997:123)

Notwithstanding, women groups can and have also be targeted in Kitui Agricultural Project for profitable activities such as rural credit services, horticultural development, small stock development, intensive poultry production and water supply structures because they are often considered as efficient vehicles for delivery of services and inputs. It is often said that women groups are proven effective entry points for activities in and reaching poor households. The worrying aspect of this, I argue lies in the fact that the poorest women may not be included in these groups because of a tendency to be preoccupied with survival issues as opposed to security or accumulation. Tinker (1990:38) states that

*“Income differentials exist in all villages and leadership of groups generally falls to the better off and better educated, who naturally tend to make decisions that favor their interests. and “... the poorest women cannot afford to take time for activities that do not immediately help them support their families.”*

Hence the tendency of the poorest women not being represented in women group activities and generally being invisible in the development process.

While the policies state that land is an important resource for women, Kitui Agricultural Project continues to implement land adjudication as per the inheritance practices of the local communities whereby land is owned by the male household

head and on his demise the sons. The land adjudication committees in the various sub locations are male dominated and it is generally assumed that land once issued to the male head will benefit all the members of the household. The project views its function as fulfilled once the land is adjudicated and the title issued to the 'household'. Indeed the indicator for land adjudication is "square kilometres adjudicated" and the supporting indicator is "titles issued". No particular attention is paid to, or follow up made as to whom the land title is issued.

Without realizing it, Kitui Agricultural Project's participation in implementation tends to be biased towards certain categories of people with resources. Where it exclusively targets women, it is questionable if it is beyond instrumentalizing them to meet project outputs.

#### *4.2.6 Monitoring, follow-ups and information*

There are several ways that monitoring information is collected in the Kitui Agricultural Project.

1. Monitoring by project management
2. Monitoring by implementing officers including Heads of Department
3. Community monitoring

Together with expenditure information, monitoring information is designed to keep all stakeholders informed on the progress of all activities.

The project monitoring reports recognize gender in terms of numbers of men and women attending training and sensitization. However the planning format does not provide for reporting on gender or gender issues especially as reporting in narrative has been deemed unnecessary and all the reports are standardized so as to provide information in a single indicator per activity.

It is chiefly in community monitoring that local people participate. There are two standard community-monitoring forms.

1. Community progress report
2. Community training report

These are in addition to quarterly community monitoring meetings (barazas) whereby the community is expected to discuss the progress reports of that period.

These community monitoring forms require a certain level of literacy and numeracy on the part of the farmer. The forms are filled by the FDA committee members or by selected literate members of the FDA, upon completion of each activity.

The monitoring done by the community has the major advantage of the project management being able to gain insight into the perceptions of the main stakeholders as concerns the project outputs and activities. Management has also been able to intercept problems before they reach a crisis situation through these reports. However, this type of participation in monitoring by the community often underestimates the skills and ability needed to carry it off. As is often the case, women, especially poor rural women more than men tend to be less literate and less vocal and are therefore less likely to be involved in this sort of monitoring system. Parpart (2000:16) has noted that

*“This process ...requires [skill] on indicators, the ability to handle figures and both numeracy and literacy”*

In which case she concludes that, measurement and evaluation continue being the arena of development experts rather than local people, and women, with their lack of skills, are left outside the loop.

While developing and encouraging a participatory monitoring system, Kitui Agricultural Project has overlooked the bias that may be ingrained in the system as poor rural women tend to lack skills and time to undertake or be involved in the detailed community monitoring that is required from the Focal Development Area.

#### *4.2.7 Weaning off process and impact assessment*

After four years of implementation an impact study is undertaken (during the first three months of the weaning off period) to document changes that have taken place during the years of implementation. The exact same questionnaire as used for baseline survey is used for the impact assessment in order to have a basis for comparison.

At the same time the FDA is prepared to enable it to carry out its own development. It is expected that the community

*“...has gathered enough expertise to identify certain economic opportunities for development ... and it is therefore necessary that support is given to the FDA to be able to tackle the organizational issues involved. ... it is hoped that*

*the farmers will seek to develop certain priority areas for the future."*  
(Guidelines for community based development activities in ASAL areas, 2001:5)

In addition it is envisaged that towards the phasing out period, farmers will increase their cost sharing contributions in order to 'cushion' their transition into self-sustainability.

Because the impact is based upon the baseline survey and uses the same questionnaire as the baseline, preferably in the same households, it will suffer the same disadvantages as the baseline in so far as women and gender is concerned.. The unit of analysis will remain the household and further disaggregation into the type of household is not likely to take place.

More important however is that the impact report will be used as the basis to determine the complete phasing out of a Focal Development Area. This essentially means that the Focal Development Area ready to be phased out is the one whose households have achieved the outputs and objectives originally envisaged in the planning. The focus tends to be on the increase in household incomes as an indicator of achievement and not the manner of distribution within or between households. The parameter for achievement based on number of households will have the usual problem that not necessarily all members of the household will have achieved from the Focal Development Area process. In addition it will suffer the dilemma that the area may be phased out as a result of achievement made by some households belonging to the more the influential members of the community. Empirically due to existing unequal social relations, the tendency is that females and especially poor females occupy the lower strata in both the household and the community and are therefore the ones most likely to accrue least benefit from the Focal Development Area processes. Eyben (1990:256) succinctly summarizes the situation.

*"Official statistics often fail to tell us what is happening within the household. Distribution issues in project appraisal tend to focus on household incomes rather than distribution within households. Consequently most surveys still involve 'household questionnaires' in which information is collected from the male 'household head'. There is often an additional assumption that all households are managed by men. It means that, not only are women's roles*

*and needs possibly ignored in actual male-headed households, but that the existence of female-headed households is denied”*

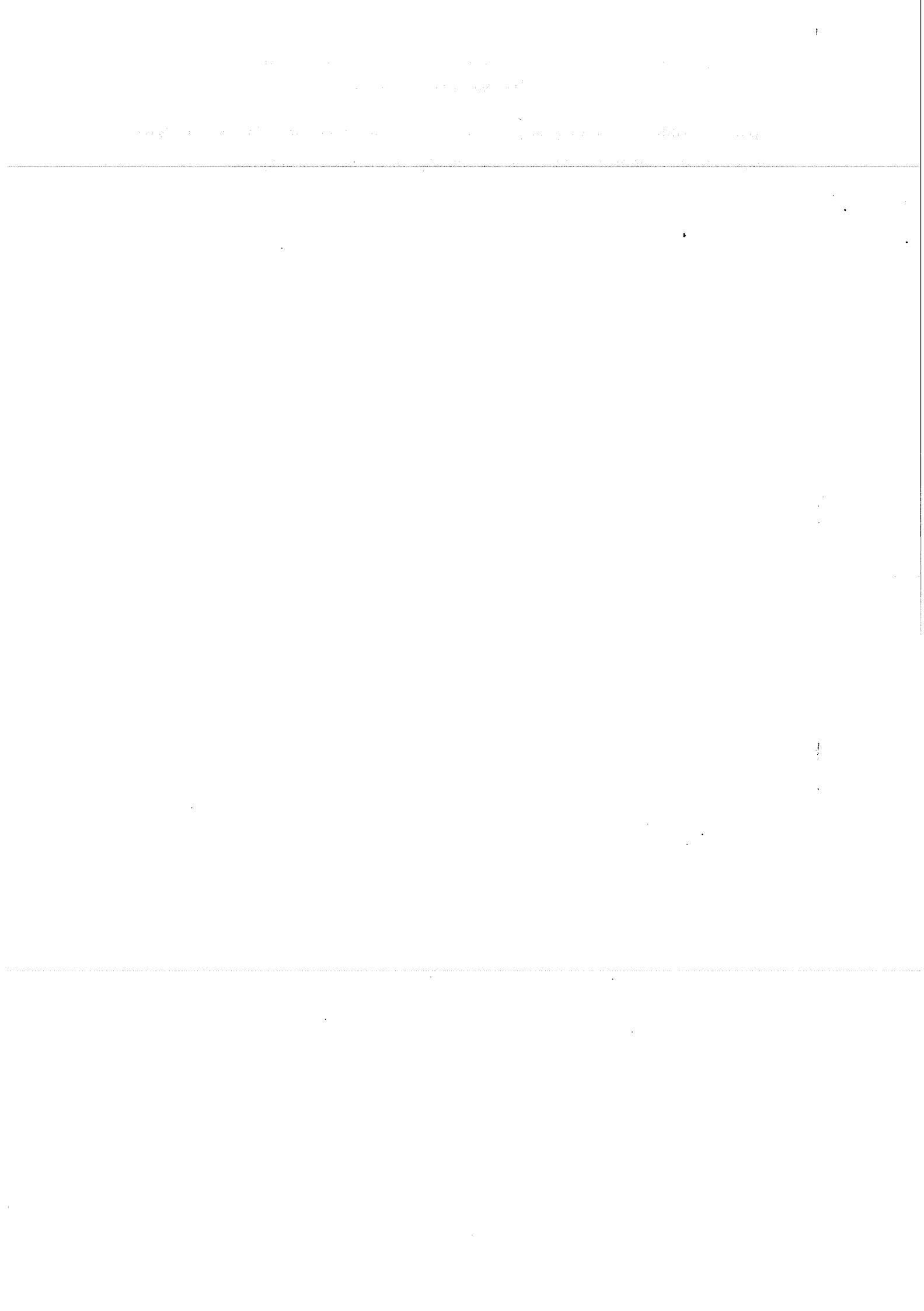
Indeed, this is the exact same description of the impact survey situation in Kitui Agricultural Project.

#### **4.3 Conclusion: Participation as Empowerment in Kitui Agricultural Project**

This chapter has gone into the participatory project cycle of Kitui Agricultural project and looked at the way poor women are located in it and the manner of including them in its activities. It has indicated the issues and generalizations that may have hindered the project from achieving the goal of operationalization of gender concerns and perspectives. It has also indicated that KAP's idea of empowerment through participation does not necessarily reach or include poor women and that participation can actually be instrumentalization of poor women and therefore disempowering to them. As earlier stated in chapter two, the assumption that participation necessarily empowers local people tends to ignore the complexity of social and power relations within communities and households and carries the danger of being used in a normative sense whereby everything participatory is seen as 'good' practice. In both cases, gender, as a basic social relation will tend to disappear from view either by being ignored or being assumed to be already included in the participatory processes. In the case of Kitui Agricultural Project, merely involving local communities in the planning, implementation and monitoring of project activities makes participation seem like a means to achieve project efficiency and satisfy donor demands. The concern with involving the 'community' in the project cycle and in the activities of the project assumes the inclusion of poor women and does not query the way they are included. There has to be an urge to address ingrained contradictions in the project cycle as shown in this chapter as well as a commitment to follow the process through in terms of resources and time.

While the participatory nature the project cycle of Kitui Agricultural Project may indeed have an impact on the empowerment of local communities, I think that as long as there is insufficient understanding of gender differences as well as other social differences in communities and as long as participation is not deconstructed to reveal its fallacies, the project will always find difficulty in operationalizing a gender

perspective within its participatory project cycle and activities. The next chapter intends to make conclusions based on the findings of the last two chapters.



## **CHAPTER FIVE: From rhetoric to rhetoric?**

### **5.1 *Conclusions***

This chapter summarizes the paper and draws conclusions based on the reflections on the policy framework and the participatory project cycle of Kitui Agricultural Project. It captures the conclusions drawn from both chapter three and four as well as more general conclusions emanating from the Kenyan context. This is in an attempt to answer the research questions on how gender is conceptualized at the programme and policy levels underlying Kitui Agricultural Project, how women are located in the participatory project cycle and activities of Kitui Agricultural Project and whether the participatory project cycle of Kitui Agricultural Project has implications on the empowerment of poor rural women.

There seems to be little or no link between policy and project because of the forces of different stakeholders operating in different contexts as concerns policy formulation and project implementation (refer to Appendix II and III). Policy formulators are almost always senior government officials who do not concede their practice to the local level while project implementers, as in this case, are lower level officers with a lot of influence from the donor through the project management team. Policy formulators are more concerned with the macro picture while project implementers are more concerned with project efficiency and how to achieve the goals of the project in the given time period. At these lower levels where officers have also to come to terms with local communities, it tends to be far much easier for projects to insist on issues such as community participation and gender. Hence the tendency is that the project cycle will try to fit into local situations while the policy framework will tend to fit into the country context. This to me explains in some way why there seems to be no coherence between the project cycle and the policies.

Notwithstanding, as Cornwall (2000:16) states, just as nominal inclusion of women seems to satisfy gender goals, so too the use of participatory methodologies may be more tokenistic than transformatory. As shown and discussed in the previous chapter, the participation practiced in Kitui Agricultural Project has tendencies leaning towards participation as a means to achieve project efficiency rather than to empower

local populations, least of all poor rural women and other less powerful members of the community.

Obviously the policy backing for Kitui Agricultural Project is weak and unclear. It has to be realized that there tends to no accountability in policy planning and formulation and the chances that one will be, for example, fired for writing poor policy are practically non-existent. Despite the fact that one of these documents uses Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs) as its basis, there is little or no evidence that this will influence the emergence of social and gender relevant perspectives.

The policies informing Kitui Agricultural Project are mainly integrationist with little or no gender transformative potential, yet participation at project level is expected to be empowering therefore transformative to local people (women included). As shown in chapter three, this does not necessarily happen and participation itself is loaded with different meanings that could be interpreted in different ways. More important though, is that questions have to be asked about how local level participatory processes can empower without support at national levels.

Gender at policy level is equated to women issues hence relegating the articulation and analysis of social and power relations between men and women that form the basis for gender inequalities into the background. This sort of thinking is reductionist in nature and tends to place emphasis on interventions that have no real threat to the structural basis of gender inequality. The support to gender and gender issues at policy level seems to me more rhetorical and to meet political ends rather than a real gender agenda.

Local cultures, prejudices, and biases that exist in societies can be real obstacles to women's participation in the public domain. In Kenya, as in many other male dominated societies, the cultural situation presents formidable obstacles that seriously limit gender perspectives from being included in development activities. As presented in the case of land rights, existing cultural values and prejudices deny women access to inheritance which impedes the implementation of land related issues. It is clear that

even when policy statements are made that could be gender transformative, local cultures may inhibit their operationalization at project level

In a country like Kenya where a proper women's movement does not exist, the position of women can be precarious. The government system continues to be male dominated and this practice reproduces itself in rural areas where projects such as Kitui Agricultural Project are located. This is the main reason why teams in Kitui Agricultural Project that are formed to enhance participatory development are male dominated with at most one or two professionally trained female field staff who are mainly project employees. As has already been acknowledged, often where there is lack of female staff, poor rural women may find it hard to articulate their issues both in public as well as in private.

Nevertheless, even when women are inserted in the mainstream agenda it does not always follow that women in positions of power will always speak for other women. The presumption that women will necessarily represent women's gender interests is much more complex than is normally recognized (Cornwall 2000:12). The possibilities often weigh heavily that they may tend to articulate male interests or simply be over-powered by them.

Over-concentration on 'community' and the 'household' as far as poverty alleviation is concerned has eventually led to the treating of both as ungendered units and community participation as an ambiguous step towards enhanced social equality (Agarwal 1997:1374). The assumptions that community participation will lead to empowering all local people emanate from this thinking. Yet, as has been discussed in the previous chapter, under the seemingly harmonious surface of the 'community', 'household' and 'participation' lie differences in power and diverse interests that could mean less power to certain categories of people like poor women. Mayoux (1995:252) puts it aptly when she states that the failure to address underlying inequalities seriously limits the degree to which women can gain from involvement in participatory projects.

Also related to this, participation is viewed as a good thing and gender is seen as automatically included in this good practice. In Kitui Agricultural Project, it seems to

me that the manner that poor women and other disadvantaged categories of people are included in this good intention is not questioned because the assumption is that nothing can go wrong so long as it is participatory.

Participation requires time, skill and resources. In ASALs like Kitui, these are precisely the things that poor rural women generally do not possess. In essence, it means that unless this is recognized and taken account of in the formulation of guidelines to participatory methodologies, poor rural women will hardly ever benefit from the advantages of participation.

From my personal perspective, obviously the project is trying to be more innovative given the lack of clear guidance by policy. However, it does seem rather strange to me that gender and participation should remain this far apart despite their shared agenda of social inclusion and transformation.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Agarwal Bina (1995), Resounding the alert: Gender, Resources and Community Action, *World Development* Vol. 25, No 9.
2. Agriculture Support Project in the Arid and Semi Arid Lands Districts of Kitui, Makueni and Taita Taveta, 1999.
3. Bisnath Savitri & Elson Diane (2000), Women's Empowerment Revisited, Background Paper to Progress of the World Women, UNIFEM Biennial Report, New York: URL: <http://www.unifem.undp.org/progressww/empower.html>, downloaded 12/15/00.
4. Cornwall Andrea (2000), Gender and Participatory Development, IDS Discussion Paper 378.
5. Cohen John M. and Uphoff Norman T. (1980), Participation's Place in Rural Development: Seeking Clarity through Specificity, *World Development*, Vol. 8.
6. Crawley Heaven (1998), Living up to the empowerment claim: The potential of PRA in Guijt and Shah (eds) *The Myth of Community*, Intermediate Technology Publications, London.
7. Crehan K (1992), Rural Households: Making a Living, in Bernstein H, et. Al (eds), *Rural Livelihoods: Crises and Responses*, Oxford: Open University Press.
8. Elson Diane (1993), Gender-Aware Analysis and Development Economics, *Journal of International Development*, 5 (2).
9. Eyben Rosalind (1990), Designing Women into Projects, *Project Appraisal* Vol. 5, No 4.
10. Folbre Nancy (1986), Cleaning House: New Perspectives on Households and Economic Development, *Journal of Development Economics*, 22 (1).
11. Guijt I. and Shah M.K. (1998), Waking up to Power, Conflict and Process, in Guijt and Shah (eds) *The Myth of Community*, Intermediate Technology Publications, London.
12. Goetz Anne Marie (1997), Introduction: Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development, in Goetz A. (ed) *Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development*, Zed boos: London.
13. Government of Kenya, Development Policy for Arid and Semi Arid Lands (1992), Government Printers.
14. Government of Kenya, National Development Plan (1997), Government Printers.

15. Government of Kenya, National Poverty Eradication Plan (1999), Government Printers.
16. Guidelines for Community Based Development Activities in ASAL Areas (2001), Prepared by Agricultural Support Project, Nairobi.
17. Harrison Elizabeth (1997), Men in Women's Groups: Interlopers or Allies, in Naila Kabeer (ed), Tactic and Trade-offs: Revisiting the Links between Gender and Poverty, IDS Bulletin, Vol. 28, No 3.
18. Human Development Report (1995), UNDP New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
19. Humble Morag (1998), Assessing PRA for implementing Gender and Development in Guijt and Shah (eds) The Myth of Community, Intermediate Technology Publications, London.
20. Jackson Cecile (1996), Rescuing Gender from the Poverty Trap, World Development Vol. 24, No 3
21. Kabeer Naila (2001), Discussing Women's Empowerment – Theory and Practice, Sida Studies No 3.
22. Kabeer Naila (1994) Gender aware Policy and Planning: A Social Relations Perspective in Macdonal M (ED) Gender Planning in Development Agencies: Meeting the Challenge, Oxfam, Oxford.
23. Kabeer Naila (1999), From Feminist Insights to an Analytical Perspective on Gender Equality, in Kabeer Naila and Subrahmanian Ramya (eds), Institutions, Relations and Outcomes: A Framework and Case Studies for Gender-aware Planning, Raj Press, New Delhi.
24. Karl Marilee (1995), Women and Empowerment: Participation and Decision-Making, Zed Books Ltd, London and New Jersey.
25. Kitui Agricultural Project Annual Work Plan and Budget, 2000-2001.
26. Lane Jacqueline (2000), Non-governmental organizations and participatory development: The concept in theory versus the concept in practice, in Nelson Nici and Wright Susan (eds), Power and Participatory Development: Theory and Practice, Intermediate Technology Publications, London.
27. Lennie June (1999), Deconstructing Gendered Power Relations in Participatory Planning: Towards an Empowering Feminist Framework of Participation and Action, Women's Studies International Forum, Vol. 22, No 1.

28. Locke Catherine and Okali Christine (1999), Analyzing changing gender relations: Methodological challenges for gender planning, *Development in Practice* 9 (3).
29. Mayoux Linda (1995), Women, Gender Inequality and Participatory Development, *Development and Change*, Vol. 26.
30. Moser Caroline (1989) Gender planning in the third world: Meeting practical and strategic gender needs, *World Development* Vol.17, No.11.
31. Mosse David (1994), Authority, Gender and Knowledge, *Development and Change*, Vol. 25
32. Nelson Nici and Wright Susan (2000), Participation and Power, in Nelson Nici and Wright Susan (eds), *Power and Participatory Development: Theory and Practice*, Intermediate Technology Publications, London.
33. Parpart Jane (2000), Participatory Empowerment Approach to Gender and Development in Africa: Panacea or Illusion, Occasional Paper, Centre of African Studies, University of Copenhagen.
34. Pretty Jules N and Scoones Ian (2000), Institutionalizing adaptive planning and local level concerns: Looking to the future in Nelson Nici and Wright Susan (eds), *Power and Participatory Development: Theory and Practice*, Intermediate Technology Publications, London.
35. Razavi Shahra and Miller Carol (1995), from WID to GAD, Conceptual Shifts in the Women and Development Discourse, UNRISD and UNDP, Occasional paper, Geneva.
36. Tinker Irene (1990), The making of a Field: Advocates, Practitioners and Scholars, in Irene Tinker (ed), *Persistent Inequalities: Women and World Development*, Chapter 3, New York: Oxford University Press.
37. World Bank Participatory Poverty Assessment (1995)

TABLE II. The posterior probability of the hypothesis  $H_0$  that  $\theta = 0$  for the data in Table I

$\theta$	$p(H_0   \theta)$
0.00	0.999999
0.005	0.999999
0.01	0.999999
0.02	0.999999
0.05	0.999999
0.10	0.999999
0.20	0.999999
0.30	0.999999
0.40	0.999999
0.50	0.999999
0.60	0.999999
0.70	0.999999
0.80	0.999999
0.90	0.999999
1.00	0.999999
1.50	0.999999
2.00	0.999999
3.00	0.999999
4.00	0.999999
5.00	0.999999
6.00	0.999999
7.00	0.999999
8.00	0.999999
9.00	0.999999
10.00	0.999999
15.00	0.999999
20.00	0.999999
30.00	0.999999
40.00	0.999999
50.00	0.999999
60.00	0.999999
70.00	0.999999
80.00	0.999999
90.00	0.999999
100.00	0.999999
150.00	0.999999
200.00	0.999999
300.00	0.999999
400.00	0.999999
500.00	0.999999
600.00	0.999999
700.00	0.999999
800.00	0.999999
900.00	0.999999
1000.00	0.999999

Table II shows the posterior probability of the hypothesis  $H_0$  that  $\theta = 0$  for the data in Table I. The posterior probability of  $H_0$  is 1.000000 for all values of  $\theta$  from 0.00 to 1000.00.

Table III shows the posterior probability of the hypothesis  $H_0$  that  $\theta = 0$  for the data in Table I. The posterior probability of  $H_0$  is 1.000000 for all values of  $\theta$  from 0.00 to 1000.00.

Table IV shows the posterior probability of the hypothesis  $H_0$  that  $\theta = 0$  for the data in Table I. The posterior probability of  $H_0$  is 1.000000 for all values of  $\theta$  from 0.00 to 1000.00.

Table V shows the posterior probability of the hypothesis  $H_0$  that  $\theta = 0$  for the data in Table I. The posterior probability of  $H_0$  is 1.000000 for all values of  $\theta$  from 0.00 to 1000.00.

Table VI shows the posterior probability of the hypothesis  $H_0$  that  $\theta = 0$  for the data in Table I. The posterior probability of  $H_0$  is 1.000000 for all values of  $\theta$  from 0.00 to 1000.00.

Table VII shows the posterior probability of the hypothesis  $H_0$  that  $\theta = 0$  for the data in Table I. The posterior probability of  $H_0$  is 1.000000 for all values of  $\theta$  from 0.00 to 1000.00.

Table VIII shows the posterior probability of the hypothesis  $H_0$  that  $\theta = 0$  for the data in Table I. The posterior probability of  $H_0$  is 1.000000 for all values of  $\theta$  from 0.00 to 1000.00.

Table IX shows the posterior probability of the hypothesis  $H_0$  that  $\theta = 0$  for the data in Table I. The posterior probability of  $H_0$  is 1.000000 for all values of  $\theta$  from 0.00 to 1000.00.

Table X shows the posterior probability of the hypothesis  $H_0$  that  $\theta = 0$  for the data in Table I. The posterior probability of  $H_0$  is 1.000000 for all values of  $\theta$  from 0.00 to 1000.00.

Table XI shows the posterior probability of the hypothesis  $H_0$  that  $\theta = 0$  for the data in Table I. The posterior probability of  $H_0$  is 1.000000 for all values of  $\theta$  from 0.00 to 1000.00.

Table XII shows the posterior probability of the hypothesis  $H_0$  that  $\theta = 0$  for the data in Table I. The posterior probability of  $H_0$  is 1.000000 for all values of  $\theta$  from 0.00 to 1000.00.

Table XIII shows the posterior probability of the hypothesis  $H_0$  that  $\theta = 0$  for the data in Table I. The posterior probability of  $H_0$  is 1.000000 for all values of  $\theta$  from 0.00 to 1000.00.

Table XIV shows the posterior probability of the hypothesis  $H_0$  that  $\theta = 0$  for the data in Table I. The posterior probability of  $H_0$  is 1.000000 for all values of  $\theta$  from 0.00 to 1000.00.

Table XV shows the posterior probability of the hypothesis  $H_0$  that  $\theta = 0$  for the data in Table I. The posterior probability of  $H_0$  is 1.000000 for all values of  $\theta$  from 0.00 to 1000.00.

Table XVI shows the posterior probability of the hypothesis  $H_0$  that  $\theta = 0$  for the data in Table I. The posterior probability of  $H_0$  is 1.000000 for all values of  $\theta$  from 0.00 to 1000.00.

Table XVII shows the posterior probability of the hypothesis  $H_0$  that  $\theta = 0$  for the data in Table I. The posterior probability of  $H_0$  is 1.000000 for all values of  $\theta$  from 0.00 to 1000.00.

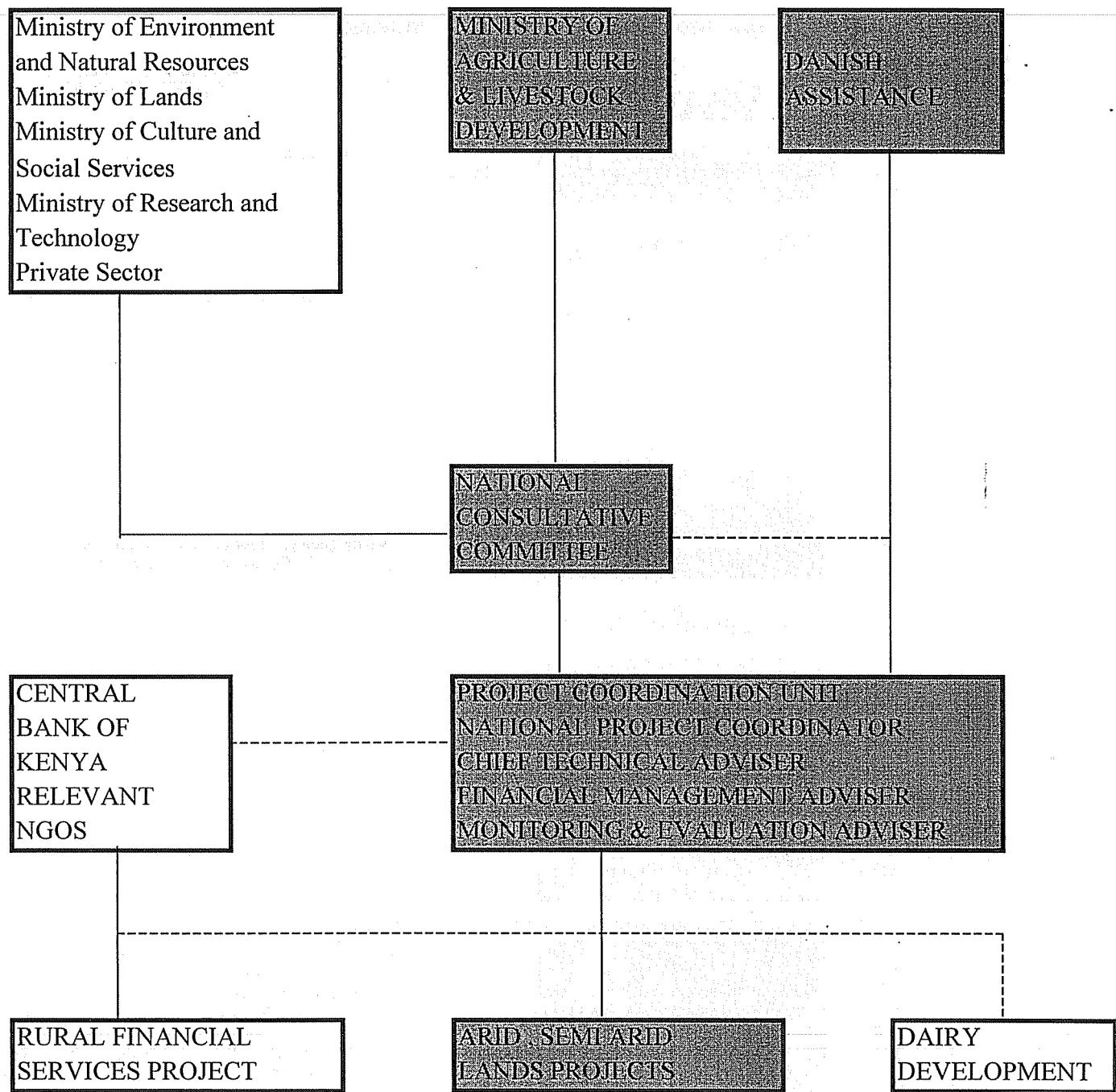
## **ANNEXES**



## Appendix I: Steps and Tasks in the FDA process.

Step	Description / Participants		
2 months preparation phase	Identification of FDA	1 week	Request to Sub DDC LDC, Sub DDC, DDC, DSC, Project
	Participatory Rural Appraisal	2 weeks	Organization of FDA committee. FDA survey. Problems / objectives identified Community – Planning teams - Divisional Officers
	Baseline Survey	1 week	Collect and analyze baseline data Community – Planning teams
	Planning Workshop	1 week	Set targets for objectives against baseline values. Specify and budget activities, complete activity plans Community – Planning team Approve workplan Community – Departments – Provincial admin. - Project
1st year of operation	Implementation	1 year	Carry out workplans in joint responsibility between community, implementers and project Community - Extensionists - project
	Monitoring		Verify and secure progress Community – Implementation officers – Monitoring teams
	Follow-ups		Verify quality. Feedback recommendations to output guidelines Departments – Project – FDA committees
	Development Review	1 day	Review progress and update current workplan and cost sharing arrangements Community – Planning teams
2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> year of operations	Implementation	1 year	Carry out workplans in joint responsibility between community, implementers and project Community - Extensionists - project
	Monitoring		Verify record and secure progress Community – Implementation officers – Monitoring teams
	Follow-ups		Verify quality. Feedback recommendations to activity type descriptions Departments – Project – FDA committees
	Development Review	1 day	Review progress and update current workplan and cost sharing arrangements Community/Farmers' associations – Departments – Project
4th year of operation - phasing out	Implementation in weaning-off process	1 year	The community continues its development process based on own capacity Community/Farmers' associations – Departments
	Demand driven extension acquired by FDA association and branch associations		The community has a system in place to ensure that required technical assistance is provided Community/Farmers' associations
	Monitoring and organizational support by project		The project continues to offer some level of support to strengthen the community's organizational and monitoring capacity Community/Farmers' associations – Departments - project
4 <sup>th</sup> – 5 <sup>th</sup> year of operations – Impact Assessment.	Impact Assessment	1 week	The Methodology used for impact assessment is identical to the baseline survey Community – Planning teams
	Monitoring and organizational support by project		The project continues to offer some level of support to strengthen the community's organizational and monitoring capacity Departments - project

## **Appendix II: ASP National Level Organization**



### Appendix III: ASP District Project Organization

