

Good Practice: Gender and Rural Transport Initiative (GRTI)

Gender Disaggregation of Findings for Rural Transport Studies

Gender Analysis Requires Disaggregation of Data by Gender

Many gender studies have suffered from two major difficulties:

- a. studies sometimes consider only women, rather than looking at the relationships between males and females, and
- b. studies that do attempt to make gender statements often base their conclusions on data that do not have separate findings on males and females, but rather collect data at the household level.

These two situations result in data that may be useful for some purposes, but which cannot effectively handle the actual gender analysis needed to understand the roles, responsibilities, constraints and needs of males and females in a locality. In most cases, such data lead the researcher to make statements that are more based upon presumptions than supported by actual facts. Having gender disaggregated research findings is a Good Practice that results in more valid information for making gender-relevant statements and planning development projects that will meet gender-specific needs.

Experience from Studies on Gender and Rural Transport

The Gender and Rural Transport Initiative (GRTI) supported project in South Africa considered the level of gender sensitivity and the process of data collection in a number of rural transport studies in Africa. This analysis specifically considered whether the survey instruments reflected the transport needs of rural communities as differentiated by gender. From the assessment, it was found that the level of gender sensitivity varied significantly. It was also reported that most of the studies reviewed indicated a preference for household questionnaires used to gather data on the household as a unit and usually administered with the male household head, rather than individual interview schedules administered to both males and females within or between households.

GRTI also sponsored several studies specifically on gender and rural transport. A common observation in many of the studies, however, was that while gender specific findings were reported, the methodology did not support gender analysis and the data were, in most cases, gathered at the household level as also found in the earlier mentioned finding of the GRTI study in South Africa. This procedure does not allow for analysis of the intra-household gender relationships in terms of what males and females in the household do and what access or control they have over resources, including means of transport. The presumed gender relationships resulted in conclusions being made by reports of studies that the data collected did not actually cover.

Example of Gender Disaggregated Data in a Rural Transport Study

The study on gender and rural transport conducted in Nigeria is an example of research that yielded gender disaggregated data. Males and females were individually interviewed and FGDs were conducted with male and female groups separately. The findings from each gender group could then be compared. The results found clear gender differences in priority needs, transport-related tasks and constraints as well as perceptions concerning types of transport. For example, there were reported cases of social restrictions affecting females' access to certain types of transport. In some localities, women are not allowed to ride bicycles or use animal-drawn carts due to cultural or religious norms. This serves as a constraint to females' use of certain types of transport, but which does not affect males. In many cases, it was also found that although the 'household' may own a bicycle or other means of transport, only the males in the family had control over its use. While males could carry out their livelihood activities using intermediate means of transport (IMT), women and their daughters were often limited to walking and head loading to carry out tasks such as transporting produce to the homestead, fetching water or carrying firewood.

Such gender-disaggregated findings can provide a better understanding of the situations of males and females and determine the difficulties and options available from the perspective of each gender group. This will help to target development projects to gender groups that are most in need of their benefits and direct strategies to overcome gender-related limitations, particularly for women.

Gender Analysis Skills Need to be Improved

There has been increasing emphasis upon the need to carry out gender analysis in each social sector to understand the differential conditions affecting males and females in the society and to ensure gender equity in development opportunities, interventions and benefits. From the experience of GRTI, however, it is apparent that while the importance of gender analysis and the commitment to carry out research to investigate gender differences exist, the actual implementation of studies to yield gender disaggregated data has fallen short of expectation.

It is apparent that research capability is generally very good in the countries and among the researchers that participated in GRTI, but that capacity building in gender analysis would facilitate the collection of better quality information on gender and transport for more effective planning. The needed skills could be applied to other sectors to enhance the quality gender analysis in those areas as well. Gathering data disaggregated by gender, such as carried out in the GRTI study from Nigeria, is a Good Practice that needs to be integrated into other research studies purporting to be conducting gender analysis.