

IPM IL Trip Report

Country(s) Visited: Nepal

Dates of Travel: May 30-June 10, 2017

Travelers Names and Affiliations:

Maria Elisa Christie, Virginia Tech

Co-PI, Vegetable and Mango Pests in Asia IPM IL

Director, Women and Gender in International Development, Office of International Research, Education, and Development (OIRE)

Purpose of Trip:

Meetings with iDE Director and staff to discuss gender research and approaches to women's participation. Undertake Focus Group Discussions in four communities for gender research (feminization of agriculture and IPM) in Surkhet; provide on-the-ground support to Master's student Kaitlyn Spangler.

Sites Visited: *(locations within countries: institutions, cities, villages, or regions)*

iDE office in Kathmandu

iDE office in Nepalgunj city, Banke District

Chhinchu town and four farming communities in Surkhet District: Chhinchu Sanohare, Dasharathpur Goramare, Sahare Baghkor, and Satmule Mehalkuna

Executive Summary:

This trip consisted primarily of gender research led by Co-PI Maria Elisa Christie, through a series of Focus Group Discussions (FGD) in four villages in Surkhet District. It began with a briefing at iDE in Kathmandu on arrival and a presentation of initial findings at the same on departure. In addition to carrying out FGDs, the intention was to support Virginia Tech student, Kaitlyn Spangler, in her research.

The six-day field visit to the Surkhet District of the Mid-Western Region of Nepal involved a team consisting of Dr. Maria Elisa Christie and Kaitlyn Spangler, Lina Jha, an iDE engineer, as a translator, and Chakra Rai, an agricultural technician from CEAPRED, as a note-taker and logistics coordinator. The team visited four IPM sites—Chhinchu Sanoharre, Dasharathpur Goramare, Sahare Baghkor, and Satmule Mehalkuna—and team conducted seven FGDs. At each site, we conducted one male-only and one female-only FGD (except in Dasarathpur Goramare in which only a female FGD was possible). Each FGD consisted of 5-10 participants, totaling 52 farmers (19 men and 33 women) in addition to four Community Business Facilitators (2 men, two women). In these FGDs, we conducted four main activities: opening questions about the gendered impacts of IPM, a timeline activity of changing gender roles in their community, participatory mapping of spaces in which IPM information is exchanged, and a socioeconomic activity chart to illustrate the division of labor. We engaged all participants in these activities to better understand how IPM has affected gender roles in their communities, as well as how gender roles and expectations have affected the adoption of IPM practices.

Initial findings revealed several benefits and challenges for farmers' participation in IPM-IL, as well as recommendations for the project. Benefits include an increase in vegetable production for nearly all farmers using the same amount of land; this production has led to greater income for farmers selling at the market. This increase in production provides an opportunity for women to be more involved in agricultural practices from which they were typically excluded, as well as access income from vegetable sales more readily than other household income. IPM can also decrease the workload for farmers by eliminating the time spent spraying chemical pesticides, allowing more time to weed and manage other household activities; this is an important consideration in the context of male out-migration and women taking on more household responsibilities in their husband's absence. The IPM farmer groups also serve as an important space for women to gather outside the home, increasing their mobility and access to opportunities. Finally, IPM contributes to greater health benefits for both men and women by reducing exposure to chemical pesticides, as well as providing healthy vegetables for immediate household consumption. Challenges expressed by farmers for implementing IPM include the difficulty learning about IPM practices in the initial stages, especially since women are often responsible for going to trainings and teaching their household. Preparation of jholmol (an insecticide made locally with plants and other materials) may also increase farmers' workload due to the breadth of ingredients required; women are often in charge of mixing this at home while men gather the materials from outside (in the forest/jungle). Finally, farmers want a better price at the market for their IPM vegetables and seedlings compared to those that are produced using agro-chemicals. Thus, recommendations for the project include considering how the farmer group meetings affect women's mobility and empowerment, understanding the spaces inside and outside the household that affect the adoption of and continued learning about IPM, and to better incorporate the value chain of the IPM vegetables into project activities. Community Business Facilitators (CBFs) —who were equal numbers men and women—can and do serve a critical role promoting IPM, having earned the trust of the community providing easy access to IPM inputs and information; it would be useful for sustainability and increased farmer involvement to provide additional training and orientation to the CBFs, perhaps bringing them together to share experiences.

Description of activities and observations

Activities

May 30: Depart from Washington for Kathmandu via Dehli, arriving morning of June 1.

June 1: Meet with iDE team (Luke Colavito, Lalit Shah, Sabita Yadad, Mukti Devkota, Bimala Colavito, Nikki Maskey) for briefing and logistical planning. Meet with Lalit and Sabita on behalf of Daniel Sumner (IPM IL Management Entity) to discuss questions regarding strategies for women's participation in preparation for gender component at TC meeting in July in Ethiopia.

June 2: Fly to Nepalgunj. Meet with Yubraj Dhakal at iDE office. Drive to Chhinchu. Meet with Kaitlyn and Lina Jha (translator). Prepare instruments for fieldwork (prefill flip chart pages for FGDs).

Dinner at Old Machhapuchre Hotel, where Kaitlyn and Lina have been staying. Move to Star Hotel for "air conditioned" rooms (when there is power and when the hotel turns the A/C on).

June 3: Meet CEAPRED field technician in Surkhet, Chakra Rai. (He accompanies us on all field trips and facilitates and scribes two of the exercises.) Hold two Focus Group Discussions at Chhinchu Sanohare (one with men and one with women; total of 17 farmers; see breakout below).

June 4: Hold two Focus Group Discussions at Dasharathpur Goramare (one with men and one with women; total of 9 farmers).

June 5: Hold one Focus Group Discussion at Sahare Baghkhori (with women only; men not available; total of 14 farmers).

June 6: Hold two Focus Group Discussions at Satmule Mehalkuna (one with men and one with women; total of 12 farmers).

June 7: All-day team work session at Star Hotel. Review process and findings from FGDs, revise research instruments, translate and write up flip chart exercises, draft report. Visit iDE Chhinchu office.

June 8: Team review and notes on farmer maps of information exchange. Drive back to Nepalgunj; fly to Kathmandu. Stay at Summit House.

June 9: Debrief and presentation at iDE offices in Kathmanu in the morning; depart for US

June 10: Arrive in US

Observations:

Benefits

- Farmers expressed pleasure and satisfaction at growing healthy vegetables with IPM. A woman farmer from Dasharathpur Goramare said: *"I feel very happy when I see the vegetables growing in such a good way on my plot. I feel motivated to grow more."*

- Both men and women mention that their production has increased with vegetables. They can grow more vegetables with less seeds on their land because they've learned proper spacing between vegetables; before IPM, they would plant their vegetables close together without proper care.
- They can sell more vegetables at the market because some people prefer the IPM vegetables (if the buyer knows the vegetables are from certain sites they know practice IPM)
- Women can be more involved with vegetable production because before, men typically sprayed chemical pesticides. Now, women can also spray bio-pesticides and prepare jholmol and farm yard manure.
- IPM farmer groups provide a space for men and women to gather inside the community and discuss their agricultural practices (i.e. what crops to grow, when to plant and harvest, what seedlings to grow) as well as a social space to gather and talk that some sites (Dasharathpur Goramare and Sahare Baghkhori specifically) did not have before.
- Women have stated that they can earn their own money from selling vegetables, especially if their husbands are working outside of the community or outside Nepal, and this income they can use to save in their cooperatives or farmer groups. Selling vegetables for income provides an extra source of income; before IPM and commercial vegetable production, most households in all sites only grew vegetables for household consumption and mostly grew rice, maize, and wheat.
- Now that the successes of IPM can be observed over the past 3-4 years, farmers are dedicating a larger space of their land to vegetable cultivation and can cultivate vegetables all year round in certain areas for both household consumption and selling at the market
- The health benefits of not using chemical pesticides has been mentioned by both men and women in all four sites. They do not get headaches, dizziness, or fainting from bio-pesticides and can eat their vegetables straight from the farm. With chemical pesticides, they would harvest their vegetables and let them sit for 7-10 days before eating to let the chemical residue dissolve.
- Many mentioned the conservation of their soil after transitioning from chemical to bio-pesticides and restoring the nutrients of their soil
- Women can learn about IPM practices even in the absence of their husbands, so it helps women become more involved in agricultural practices; in many areas, 15-20 years ago, women were not involved with any other work other than household activities inside the home. Some women indicated that they would be doing the agricultural work anyway since their husbands are not at home, so they enjoy being more involved.
- Some farmers (both men and women) indicate that IPM saves them time because they do not need to spend time spraying chemical pesticides; they can use this extra time to weed their plots. Also, they said that using farm yard manure (FYM) properly by applying it all over the field, they can save time as compared to digging holes and putting the manure/fertilizer they used to use inside the holes
- IPM IL empowers women to have increased mobility and attend meetings. In the Mehalkuna women's FGD, the group waited for the activities to begin even though they had not yet eaten, or prepared food for their husbands to eat. One woman said: *"I think men wouldn't allow us to gather like this without serving food. If we would be here, he [my husband] would come and chase us. Now, I am here without having food."*

Challenges

- Both men and women at each site said that learning the different IPM practices took a long time to learn initially and be able to practice. Specifically, they mentioned that they did not know anything about preparing jholmol, spacing between plants, preparing nursery beds, or proper weeding practices; learning these took time.
- Many indicated in the household interviews specifically that they had forgotten everything since their last IPM trainings – they need consistent IPM trainings and places to learn and discuss about IPM with the technicians in the field and other farmers in their community to continue practicing.
- Some say that IPM increases their workload because they used to be able to purchase chemical pesticides directly from the market and apply it directly to their field. Now, they have to prepare jholmol (including collecting all of the materials and mixing it in the drum) which takes time to do themselves. In addition, farmers are using Trichoderma and other biopesticides as well as sticky traps and other pheromone lures.
- Others say that IPM increases their workload because they are growing more vegetables now so by learning more techniques and cultivating more vegetables, they will have more work to do; at the same time, they report this has increased their production and income. This includes learning how to manage a wider variety of vegetables in one field and using the proper techniques for each crops, as well as keeping up with the increase in weeding. Weeding is typically women’s work, so this may increase women’s workload.

Farmers indicate that they are frustrated that their IPM vegetables do not get a better price at the market compared to the chemically produced vegetables Gendered space

- For some sites (Dasharathpur Goramare), the IPM farmer group meetings are a place for women to gather because there is only 1 male member of the farmer group since their husbands are mostly outside working in India and other gulf countries.
- For other sites (Sahare Baghkhori and Satmule Mehalkuna), other savings and credit cooperatives, as well as mother’s groups are places where only women will go and meet monthly. They can save their money and discuss IPM at these spaces.
- At most sites, playing cards is only an activity that men partake in. Wherever they play cards (can be at the market, at a hotel, or outside someone’s house) is typically a man’s space. They do not necessarily discuss IPM there.
- Men also indicated that they will meet at places in the market to have drinks and discuss with each other, where they share information about IPM
- Some women (specifically in Dasharathpur Goramare) said that when they are collecting household water at a tap stand (typically shared by 4-5 households), it is mostly women that go collect water, so they discuss with each other there.

Other observations

- At two sites (Dasharathpur Goramare and Sahare Baghkhori), the IPM farmer group did not exist as a farmer group before the IPM IL project. At the other two sites (Satmule

Mehalkuna and Chhinchu Sanoharre), the farmer group existed for about 10-11 years before the IPM IL project and then became the IPM Farmer group 3-4 years ago. This is a significant consideration when considering the structure and practices of each farmer group.

Farmer cooperatives serve as an important space for both men and women to discuss IPM, ask questions with each other, the CBFs, and the agricultural technicians. They serve as a space outside of the home where farmers make decisions about their agricultural land, so the members of the household and even those who own the agricultural land are not the sole influences about how they cultivate their land. Additionally, the cooperatives serve as a space where women can attend public gatherings, participate in group meetings, and hold leadership positions and speak in public; these spaces did not exist over 15 years ago in each site.

Therefore, the cooperative is an important space where men and women can go equally and take on new roles that were previously not allowed or expected of women.

FGD numbers					
date	Place	M	F	Age range	plus CBF each
3-Jun	Sanoharre	7		19-60	
3-Jun	Sanoharre		10	24-47	1
4-Jun	Dasharathpur Goramare		9	28-46	
4-Jun	Baghkhorr	6		50--60	1
5-Jun	Baghkhorr		8	23-34	1
6-Jun	Mehalkuna	6		55-62	
6-Jun	Mehalkuna		6	22-40	1
	FGD participants	19	33		52
	CBFs	2	2		4
	total participants in fieldwork				56
	total male FGD	3			
	total female FGD	4			
	Total FGD	7			

Training Activities Conducted

Program type (workshop, seminar, field day, short course, etc.)	Date	Audience	Number of Participants		Training Provider (US university, host country institution, etc.)	Training Objective
			Men	Women		
Gender fieldwork	6/2-8	iDE and CEAPRED	1	1	Virginia Tech	Train field team in gender and participatory methods for Focus Group Discussions

Suggestions, Recommendations, and/or Follow-up Items:

- The gender of the CBF does not appear to affect their ability to access men or women farmers and perform their roles. There were no stated challenge faced by the women CBFs in being able to access men at home or having an advantage in being able to visit with women at home compared to men. Men would be able to do the same activities they can do. The CBFs are selected by their communities based on characteristics that they feel make the candidate better suited for the job; gender does not seem to be one of the characteristics. However, given that women can also do this job, the fact that they are a visible role model for other women in the community means that a female CBF may have an empowering impact for women besides their own increased opportunities for income generation, mobility, and leadership. However, given the importance of community support for the CBFs, an organic process that does not include IPM selecting them instead of the community is recommended; i.e. they should not be selected by gender. However, IPM IL could play a role better positioning women to be selected by their communities by providing them with basic training, such as in public speaking, that develops their leadership and confidence.
- The savings and credit aspect of the IPM farmer group meetings is a key part of bringing farmers to meeting and keeping them involved in the meetings. This component should not be neglected.
- The value chain of the IPM vegetables must be considered and strengthened.
 - Farmers want a better price for their IPM vegetables at the market compared to chemical vegetables. IPM/iDE should work at market level to get premium prices for IPM products.
 - Only 1 site (Chhinchu Sanoharre) has a collection center for crops. The other 3 sites must rely on traders (men who come in vehicles) to collect their vegetables or taking their vegetables by themselves either by foot or by local vehicles when they are available. This is a potential place to provide support in transporting vegetables to nearby and farther markets.
 - Both men and women will take their vegetables to the market, but when women have the ability to sell their own vegetables, they have easier access to that income and often state that they can use this to save in the cooperative or purchase household goods. So, if women can be directly involved in selling their vegetables, this is a potential for increasing their control over extra income for their household.

- It is important to note who is attending trainings from each household because that member will be in charge of teaching the rest of their household what they learned or will be in charge of managing those practices on their plot. In the case of an absent male in the household, women will often attend the trainings and then teach their mother-in-laws and children, while their father-in-law is in charge of ploughing only (if they live with their in-laws). However, the father-in-law often has the final word about agricultural decisions on their land, but is often not trained or knowledgeable about IPM.

List of Contacts Made:

Name	Title/Organization	Contact Info (address, phone, email)
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