



IPM Innovation Lab Trip Report

Country(s) Visited: Nepal

Dates of Travel: May 1, 2017 – July 6, 2017

Travelers Names and Affiliations:

Kaitlyn Spangler, Virginia Tech

Graduate Research Assistant (GRA), Vegetable and Mango Pests in Asia IPM IL

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

M.S. Student, Department of Geography, Virginia Tech University

Purpose of Trip:

To conduct gender research for the Asia Vegetable and Mango IPM-IL project in the Surkhet District of Nepal toward the fulfillment of an M.S. degree in the Department of Geography at Virginia Tech University

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

iDE office in Kathmandu

iDE office in Nepalgunj, Banke District

Fieldwork in the Surkhet District including lodging in Chhinchu town and field visits to four farming communities: Chhinchu Sanohare, Dasharathpur Goramare, Sahare Baghkhori, and Satmule Mehalkuna



Executive Summary:

This trip consisted of gender research for the Asia Vegetable and Mango IPM-IL project in the Surkhet District of Mid-Western Nepal. Primarily, Kaitlyn Spangler, an M.S. student at Virginia Tech University, and the field team conducted this research between May 6 and July 4, 2017 with a field visit from Co-PI Maria Elisa Christie from June 2 to 8, 2017. The field team conducted this gender research in the four current research sites in the Surkhet District of the IPM-IL project: Chinchu Sanoharre, Dasharathpur Goramare, Sahare Baghkor, and Satmule Mehalkuna. Over 44 days, we conducted 57 semi-structured household interviews, seven focus group discussions (FGDs), 11 key informant interviews, and four participant observation activities with 120 total men and women (74 women and 46 men).

Observations include: vegetable production is more widely practiced than before the IPM-IL project, and this is changing the customs of agricultural practices. Migratory patterns including long-term or temporary migration within or outside Nepal affect the husband's involvement with vegetable production, as well as agricultural knowledge of how the household's land is being cultivated. In particular, IPM vegetable production introduces different roles on the farm to be negotiated and managed by available household members, and women are often taking on such tasks, including planting, weeding, and deciding what to grow in their husband's absence. The presence of in-laws in any household affects who makes decisions and holds decision-making influence in the household. Many farmers use the cooperative to decide what to plant in their fields, so these decisions are not made solely at the household level. The cooperatives also provide a place that was not available before the project for women to speak with other women to both socialize and discuss agricultural practices. Finally, IPM knowledge sharing depends on IPM cooperative membership and household composition. In the case where women attend such trainings, they become the gatekeepers of IPM information that can improve their vegetable yield and potentially increase income for the household.

Recommendations include: project records, training activities, and future research should incorporate data indicating present household members and male out-migration patterns to target men or women household members and better understand the gender impacts of technological interventions. Increasing membership and leadership presence of women in farmer groups and savings and credit cooperatives, as well as increasing women's mobility, may serve to improve gender equity amongst the community and influence public perceptions of gender roles. To address intra-household gender dynamics both on and off the farm, the IPM project could incorporate targeted and specific gender trainings into IPM activities. Future efforts should continue to strengthen and build positive relationships between the CBF and project staff, as well as between the CBF and their communities. Future efforts should track the changing demographics of farmers involved with trainings and ongoing project activities. Furthermore, future research should consider how changing demographics and migratory patterns affect the priorities and interests of men and women in these communities, as well as their availability of time.



Description of activities and observations

Activities

Throughout 44 days in the Surkhet District of Mid-Western Nepal, our field team conducted 57 household interviews, seven focus group discussions (FGDs), 11 key informant interviews, and four participant observation activities across four field sites. We talked to 74 women and 46 men, totaling 120 people. The 57 household interviews included both men and women randomly selected from each site based on presence of male out-migration and involvement with IPM practices recorded in the IPM-IL database. We conducted one men-only and one women-only FGD in each site, except for Dasharathpur Goramare in which a men-only FGD was not possible; these FGD participants had not been previously selected for household interviews. Key informants were purposefully sampled and included iDE and CEAPRED personnel, IPM-IL community-based facilitators (CBFs) in each community, agro-vets, and cooperative leaders.

Semi-structured household interviews lasted about 1 hour, in which we used the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) and the Gender Dimensions Framework (GDF) to inform interview questions. The structure of each interview included opening questions about the timeline of agricultural practices and gender roles in the community. Furthermore, we used participatory mapping to ask farmers to illustrate areas that are important to their agricultural production and IPM practices.

During key-informant interviews, we talked with agro-vets, CBFs, and iDE personnel about their involvement with and history of the IPM project. Through unstructured questions and conversation, we gained detailed information about community-level participation with the IPM-IL project.

We conducted separate men and women FGDs and compared the sex-disaggregated responses between FGDs. Four main activities of each FGD included timeline generation of agricultural practices and changing gender roles in recent history, as well as open discussion about the challenges and benefits of IPM. Furthermore, participants engaged in participatory mapping of spaces they learn about and share information about IPM and with whom (men or women). Finally, they created an activity chart of productive, reproductive, community, and leisure activities indicating who does what (men and/or women) in the community

Finally, we used participant observation to gain personal insight into men and women's livelihood tasks and everyday life. We chose key farmers that we had already interviewed to help them complete daily agricultural or household activities such as planting rice, cooking, cutting grasses for fodder, and preparing *johlmol*.

Trip Schedule

- May 1 – May 3, 2017: Travel from Philadelphia, PA to Kathmandu, Nepal



- May 3 – 6, 2017: Meetings and logistics coordination with Lina Jha, Lalit Prasad Sah, Luke Colavito, Roshnee Thapa, and the financial team at the iDE office in Kathmandu
- May 6 – June 14, 2017: Fieldwork in Surkhet District conducting household interviews, key informant interviews, and FGDs with Lina Jha, Field Translator and iDE Engineer, Chakra Rai, CEAPRED Agricultural Technician, and Mukti Devkota, Field Translator
 - June 2 – 8, 2017: Field visit from Dr. Maria Elisa Christie, Co-PI and Director of Women and Gender in Development at Virginia Tech University, to conduct 7 FGDs
- June 15, 2017: Meeting with Lalit Sah, Roshnee Thapa, Lina Jha, and financial team at iDE office in Kathmandu
- June 28, 2017: Meeting with Luke Colavito, Komal Pradaman, Lina Jha, Sabita Yadav, and other iDE personnel to prepare for follow-up trip to Surkhet District at iDE office in Kathmandu
- June 29 – July 3, 2017: Follow-up fieldwork to conduct participant observation and key informant interviews at two sites, Chhinchu Sanoharre and Dasharathpur Goramare, with Lina Jha, Chokra Rai, and Den Chiring Lopchaan, iDE Driver
- July 4, 2017: Presentation of research and preliminary findings/suggestions and final meeting with Luke Colavito, Bimala Colavito, Lalit Prasad Sah, Komal Pradaman, Lina Jha, Mukti Devkota, Sabita Yadav, Corey O’Hara, and other iDE personnel at iDE office in Kathmandu
- July 5 – July 6, 2017: Travel from Kathmandu, Nepal to Philadelphia, PA

Observations:

Based on our research within the four IPM research sites of the Surkhet District, we have made several observations regarding the gendered impacts and considerations of the IPM-IL project. These observations are limited to the four IPM research sites in the Surkhet District, and their relevance to other geographical locations or within other projects may vary.

In the context of male out-migration, both domestically and internationally (i.e. India or other Gulf countries) women are taking on new agricultural roles. Traditionally, only men plough the agricultural fields (for any crop), but given new patterns of male out-migration, women are either learning to plough themselves or hiring other men in the community to do it for them when needed. Furthermore, control over income is changing with men migrating and leaving the household. Some women are taking control of the income in their absence, while others still rely on over-the-phone communication with their husbands or their father and mother-in-law to manage household expenses, as well as savings and loans. These practices are highly varied between households, and they depend on the agreement between household members as well as presence of in-laws. Finally, vegetable production introduces new roles on



the farm to be negotiated and managed by available household members, and women are often taking on such tasks, including planting, weeding, and deciding what to grow in their husband's absence.

The composition of the household matters. The presence of in-laws in any household affects who makes decisions and holds decision-making influence in the household. If a mother or father-in-law (or both) are present, their decision-making power often supersedes that of the daughter-in-law. The presence of the husband in the household and the migratory pattern he follows affects who is involved in agricultural and household labor and decision-making. Migratory patterns including long-term or temporary migration within or outside Nepal affect his involvement with IPM vegetable production, as well as agricultural knowledge of how their land is being cultivated. Most women stated their husbands as the head of the household, regardless of his physical presence.

Certain agricultural practices are gendered, and these practices are evolving with migratory patterns. In rice production, communities use a give and take system of shared labor in which 20 to 40 people help transplant rice for one person's land each day; they take turns helping each other with all related activities. Men plough, women plant. This system does not exist for any other crop. As women are increasingly managing ploughing (either themselves or through hired labor), as well as increasingly managing decisions about vegetable production amidst various male out-migration patterns, the strict division of gendered labor on the farm is changing. The following quote illustrates how a woman farmer has learned to plough as well as confront an absence of men for ploughing labor in her community.

“While ploughing, it is difficult to control the oxen, to move them in the right direction, and to move the ploughing tool it is difficult. My back pains doing this. My son is only 8 years old, so he doesn't help me in ploughing. Especially during the rainy season, it is difficult to find someone from the village to plough.” **Another woman cut in:** *“Sometimes, the situation is such that we feel like crying – even when I have money, I cannot do anything.”* (Women farmers from Satmule Mehalkuna, 6/12/17)

Vegetable production is more widely practiced than before the IPM-IL project, and this is changing the customs of agricultural practices. All research sites are now cultivating vegetables, although this production is particularly new for certain areas. The introduction of vegetables to sell commercially at the market and consume in the home provides a source of income unavailable before, as well as more vegetables for home consumption. Below is a quote from a woman farmer that illustrates how her vegetable production has changed with IPM, as well as how this has affected the availability of vegetables at home.

“Previously in our village, we used to sow many seedlings in our land to grow. But, after sowing such a less amount [with IPM], I felt like I did not know whether my plot would be left uncultivated or what would happen. But later on, when the crops started growing, it seemed to cover my whole field, and I felt like this is a benefit [of IPM]. Later on, when I started practicing IPM, I feel I can have more benefits like this. I feel good because I have small land and my production has increased in the same plot. Previously, I didn't have enough production even to



last only 6 months. But now, using IPM, I can grow enough for 12 months.” (Woman farmer from Dasharathpur Goramare on 5/19/17)

Because each household manages their vegetable production, available household members negotiate men and women’s responsibilities. This provides an opportunity for the gendered division of labor traditionally seen in rice production to be altered or challenged amidst the different type of work that vegetable production demands (more weeding, less ploughing, or planting throughout the year at different times).

The IPM cooperative meetings are an important public space for gender equity and agricultural decision-making. Many farmers use the cooperative to decide what to plant in their fields, so these decisions are not made solely at the household level. The cooperatives are places for women to mix with men publicly – an occurrence not traditionally accepted 20 to 25 years ago. The cooperatives also provide a place that was not available before the project for women to speak with other women to both socialize and discuss agricultural practices. Finally, IPM knowledge sharing depends on IPM cooperative membership and household composition. Whoever attends IPM trainings is responsible for teaching the rest of the household. In the case where women attend such trainings, they become the gatekeepers of IPM information that can improve their vegetable yield and potentially increase income for the household. Consideration of these roles within the household and the community is increasingly important to target training activities and understand how IPM knowledge is shared.

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

- Household headship may not reveal anything about the composition of the household. Project records, training activities, and future research should incorporate data indicating present household members and male out-migration patterns to target men or women household members and better understand the gender impacts of technological interventions.
- Although women are publicly more involved, gender equity within the household is highly varied. Increasing membership and leadership presence of women in farmer groups and savings and credit cooperatives, as well as increasing women’s mobility, may serve to improve gender equity amongst the community and influence public perceptions of gender roles. To address intra-household gender dynamics both on and off the farm, the IPM project could incorporate targeted and specific gender trainings into IPM activities. These activities could help illustrate areas for greater gender equity in IPM practices and labor expectations.
- The CBF plays a crucial role to the sustainability of the project based on community interaction and information exchange about IPM. Future efforts should continue to strengthen and build positive relationships between the CBF and project staff, as well as between the CBF and their communities. This necessitates transparency with ongoing IPM research efforts, and frequent



training and learning activities can help build and strengthen social networks and increase exposure to different gender roles and expectations between communities.

- Control over income from IPM vegetables is determined at the household level, but the market level holds potential to increase women’s mobility. Paying attention to who goes to the market to sell vegetables and how different households manage this income can help illustrate how increasing women’s mobility outside of the home affects individual and community gender norms.
- Male out-migration is changing both men and women’s roles in the household, on the farm, and in public spaces. As male (and increasingly female) out-migration continues to be a significant source of income for rural households, future efforts should track the changing demographics of farmers involved with trainings and ongoing project activities. Furthermore, future research should consider how changing demographics and migratory patterns affect the priorities and interests of men and women in these communities, as well as their availability of time.

List of Contacts Made:

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