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Gender Assessment Report

Background information:

The Republic of Armenia is a mountainous country encompassing 29 743 square kilometers. It is bordered by Turkey to the northwest, Georgia to the north, Iran to the south, and Azerbaijan to the southwest and east.

Ethnic Armenians represent 98.11 percent of the population and the main minority ethnic groups are Yezidis (1.17 percent) and Russians (0.39 percent). Other minorities include Assyrians, Kurds, Ukrainians, Greeks, Georgians and Persians. The population of Armenia is 2 972 700 people, among them 1 408 200 men and 1 564 500 women (ARMSTAT, 2018).

In 1993 the Republic of Armenia ratified the UN Convention “On the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women”. The Republic of Armenia assumed responsibility of excluding any form of discrimination against women, the fixation and guarantee of the principle of legal equality between men and women by the national legislation.

In the sphere of protection of women’s rights Armenia has also ratified important international documents such as the UN convention “On the Political Rights of Women”, the European Council conventions “On Combating Human Trafficking”, “On Equal Pay for Male and Female Workers for Work of Equal Value”, “On the Nationality of Married Women”, “On Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation”.

Article 30 of the RA Constitution clearly states the principle of equality between women and men. Despite efforts to reduce gender inequalities by the government in the last two decades, a gap between legislation and implementation exists.

To date, cases of violation of women's rights and discrimination against them continue, such as horizontal and vertical segregation against women in the workplace, lack of women in senior management, etc. Managerial positions occupied by men are higher than by women 2.4 times (ARMSTAT, 2018). Their salaries significantly differ from men’s and are much lower. Most women in rural areas are unemployed. They become housewives, do all the housework, and rarely leave the house at all. Finally, the situation of women is aggravated by widespread poverty.

The existence of such cases is evidence of the need for continuous and coordinated action aimed at protecting women’s rights in order to change the stereotypes regarding women’s role in the society, women’s abilities to reveal their educational, economic, social and political potential.

Objectives:

Achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is integral to each of the 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this relation, the Focus group discussion was conducted to understand the current situation, needs and challenges faced by women in rural and urban areas.

The results of the survey will be utilized in future activities by Rural Sustainable Development Agricultural Foundation to promote female participation in decision making.

The objectives are as follows: To find out:

- ✓ Division of Labour between Women and Men
- ✓ Access, Power and Control over Resources
- ✓ Recognition of differentiated needs and interests of women and men regarding water and sanitation
- ✓ Decision Making Ability
- ✓ Domestic Violence
- ✓ Status of Men and Women before the Law
- ✓ Most Vulnerable

Location:

The village of Solak is located on the bank of the River Hrazdan, in Kotayk Province, 5 km south-west of the regional center. The distance from Yerevan is 38 km. Height above sea level is 1650 m.

Solak has a population of 2678. The territory is 3020 km². The community has a school, a library, a House of Culture, a kindergarten and an ambulatory care unit. The villagers are engaged in cattle breeding, and growing of vegetables and grains.

The Women Support Center, established by the NGO "Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment", supports the local women farmers in their agricultural activities.

Methodology:

The Focus group discussion (FGD) was organized on the 14th of December 2018 in Solak village of Kotayk marz. The participants were 15 people: 5 women and 10 men. Three participants were from urban areas. The Focus group discussion was facilitated by Dr. Emma Anakhasyan, expert on gender, water and sanitation. The group of participants was guided by the facilitator who introduced topics for discussion and helped the group to participate in a lively and natural discussion among themselves.

FGD is useful in providing an insight into different opinions of participants. Prior to discussion, the questionnaire was designed accordingly to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 5 and 6.



Focus group discussion in Solak village

The report comprises from 2 major parts: Situation in the country based on the literature review and results of the FGD.

Analysis and results:

1 Division of Labour between Women and Men

SDG 5 target 5.4.: Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.

Situation in Armenia: Armenian society has more expectations of men than of women in regards to family life, provisions of financial security, as well as in politics. The role of men as the primary breadwinner is much more important for Armenian men, than for Armenian women.

A significant proportion of women are engaged in informal work, which leaves them without the protection of the Labor Law (e.g., a lack of maternity or child care leave). Informal employment rate is higher in rural areas, as it is shown in the Figure 1.

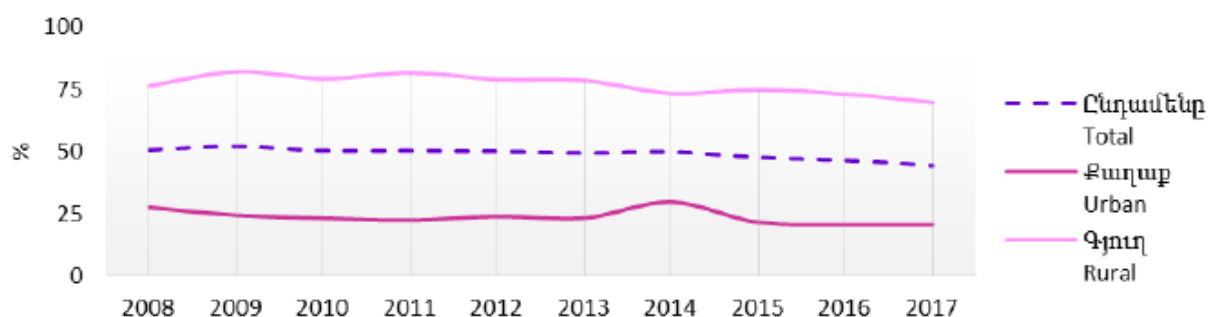


Figure 1. Informal employment rate¹ in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors by residency (ARMSTAT, 2018)

¹ Analysis of formal and non-formal employment rate is based on number of jobs and not number of persons. Therefore, the total employment by job nature will be larger than the total number of workers. (ARMSTAT, 2018).

FGD: In family farming, a rigid distribution of tasks persists. Men is involved in capital intensive tasks, involving a greater amount of machinery and technology, and in tasks that are better paid. They work in the field, orchards or for the private sector. Cattle breeding, including cattle-shed disinfection, grass harvesting, grass delivery, baling, mowing, animal slaughtering and sale of meat, usually carried out by men.

Women are mainly responsible for domestic activities (unpaid work). Women are usually associated with child care and housework, whether they are employed outside the home or not. They are strongly involved in livestock farming, particularly in dairy production (including milking, milk processing, and the marketing of milk and other dairy products). Women ensure existence of food and products at home. Some women, especially who are heading households, are involved in agricultural activities too. Especially, those women are overwhelmed with work in relation to unpaid domestic activities. This brings to time poverty and limitation of women's capabilities in engaging in gainful activities.

Both men and women are spending about 12-15 hours for their tasks. Young people work less. In comparison with urban people, villagers spent more time on their daily activities.

2 Access, Power and Control over Resources

SDG 1.4: By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.

Situation in Armenia: Generally, few women hold the role of decision-maker in the family in relation to property, financial assets and their management. Decision-making power at household level also depends on the importance of the issue and how significantly it affects the family budget, with women having greater involvement in smaller decision.

Ownership equality: 75.2 percent of women age 15-49 with own (alone and/or jointly with someone else) agricultural or non-agricultural land (SDG Implementation: Voluntary National Review, Armenia. 2018).

Registry practices: Even though land was provided to citizens regardless of their sex, the actual distribution and registration of land was carried out by those identified as "heads of the households" (FAO, Gender, Agriculture, and Rural Development in Armenia, 2017).

Inheritance practices: Even though the law treats all equally, local customs often lead to sons inheriting property and money (SDG Implementation: Voluntary National Review, Armenia. 2018).

Share (%) of labour force to working-age population of the same age and sex group is shown in the Figure 2.

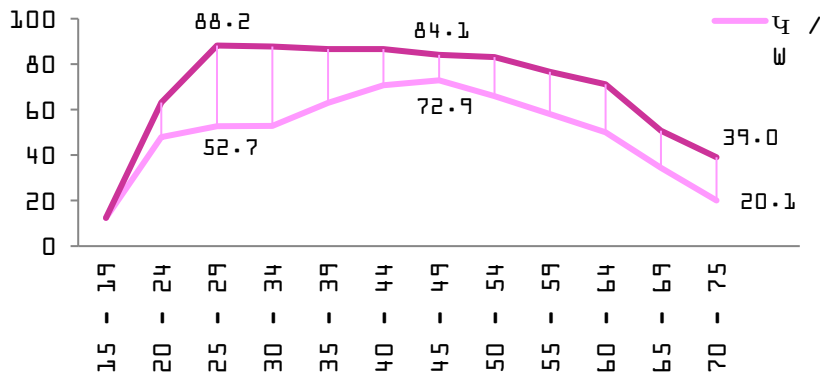


Figure 2. Labour Force Participation Rate by Age Groups, 2017 (ARMSTAT, 2018).

FGD: Land owners are mainly men but women have equal rights. According to villagers, before few women hold the role of the decision-maker in the family in relation to property, financial assets and their management. Currently, this approach is changed and more women have equal decision rights in their families. Young people are working mainly in urban areas and they are more independent.

Villagers complained that they have many loans and difficulties to pay back. High interest rates and short repayment periods are especially problematic for women who run small agriculture based businesses.

In general, money keeper is woman. In case of big scale expenditure a couple discusses and decides how to deal.

The participants believe that women and men in urban areas of Armenia have equal rights.

3 Recognition of differentiated needs and interests of women and men regarding water and sanitation

SDG 6.2: By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.

Situation in Armenia: Women are the main users of water in households (for preparing meals, cleaning, laundering, bathing children, gardens and livestock, and other domestic duties), and they also play a major role in collecting and managing water for domestic use. Thus, women are acutely affected by limitations on household water.

Although women in Armenia are concerned about water supply and sanitation issues, they have limited opportunities to be involved in formal decision-making processes. Few women in top management positions are responsible for water resource management. Women are, however, well represented in civil society organizations concerned with ecology and the environment.

FGD: Women in focus group noted the need to build better hygienic sanitary facilities for the school and ensuring continuous water supply. There was a lack of water in the water reservoir, as neighbouring village collected most of water. As a result there was no water in the school in September and October, 2018 and children faced difficulties. The second reason was mismanagement of the irrigation water. Some villagers overused drinking water for the irrigation purposes, which resulted the low pressure in the system.

Questions on menstrual hygiene were not asked, as it is very sensitive issue in rural areas to discuss when both sexes are present.

4 Decision Making Ability

SDG 5 target 5.5: Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

Situation in Armenia: Despite the introduction of a quota system (30 percent quota for women, ensured by new Electoral Code, entered into force since June 1, 2016) to assist women to enter politics, women’s low level of representation in national government persists. Women are much better represented in supporting and non-leadership positions in the public sector. Women are also underrepresented in regional and municipal administrative bodies that set priorities locally and that operate at the level of development project implementation. Women play a greater role in civil society than in political office.

FGD: According to villagers, before few women hold the role of the decision-maker in the family in relation to property, financial assets and their management. Currently, this approach is changed and more women have equal decision rights in their families. Although young people are more independent (there are 30-40 students in universities), they seek advice of their parents.

Currently, couples discuss together for the big scale expenditure (house, car, etc.) but for the small scale expenditure women decide. In urban areas the equality is more visible.

5 Domestic Violence

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Situation in Armenia: The proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner was notably lower than in the world. 4.5 percent of women were subjected to physical violence in Armenia in 2015 compared to 19 percent of the world average (SDG Implementation: Voluntary National Review, Armenia. 2018).

According to the research psychological violence is a “leader” among various forms of violence in Armenia and is followed by economic abuse and physical violence. 2 types of acts are prevalent in physical violence but to a considerably smaller extent. Those are a man slapping his female partner or throwing something at her that could hurt her (12.9% of men and 10.3% of women reporting that) or pushing or shoving her (11.4% and 7.5% respectively) (Men and Gender Equality in Armenia Report on Sociological Survey Findings, UNFPA, 2016).

FGD: Villagers stated that it is very rare that husband may hit his wife. Mainly, it can happen when husband is very angry and under the alcohol influence.

6 Status of Men and Women before the Law

SDG 5 target 5.1. End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere

Situation in Armenia: The principle of equality between sexes is enshrined in the Armenian Constitution and is reflected in the national legislation. The Armenian Government has been taking certain steps to harmonize national policies with the gender equality principle and with international requirements in that field. Thus, the Beijing Platform for Action as well as other international documents on gender equality laid the groundwork for creating a number of national documents to ensure gender equality, primarily the RoA Gender Policy Concept Paper, which aims to facilitate gender mainstreaming in all spheres of socio-political and socio-economic life and in policies at all levels of government as a tool for ensuring sustainable democratic development of the society and for consolidating democratic, open and just civil society and

the rule-of-law State.

The Law of the Republic of Armenia on ensuring women and men equal rights and equal opportunities, took effect after the RA President signed it on 11 June 2013. Among the recent documents adopted by the Armenian Government are the RA Gender Policy Strategic Action Plan for 2011-2015 and the National Action Plan to Combat Gender Based Violence for 2011-2015, the Gender Equality Strategy for 2017-2021 and an Action Plan for subsequent years.

However, women are not able yet to fully benefit from equal opportunities provided by the law and enjoy gender equality.

FGD: The participants mentioned that they have equal right in front of the court. But court is frequently support women.

7 Most Vulnerable

SDGs 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere; and

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Situation in Armenia: Gender inequality is most evident in rural areas, where the prospect of employment is even lower.

From 1 230 700 economically active population 1 011 700 are employed in 2017. From employed people 34.8 percent of women and 28.2 percent of men are involved in the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector. The economic activity rate by age are: over 80 percent for men at the age rate 25-54, over 70 percent for women at the age rate 40-49, about 70 percent for urban population aged 25-49 and about 80 percent for rural population aged 40-59 (ARMSTAT, 2018).

Changes of employment over years are shown in the Figure 3.

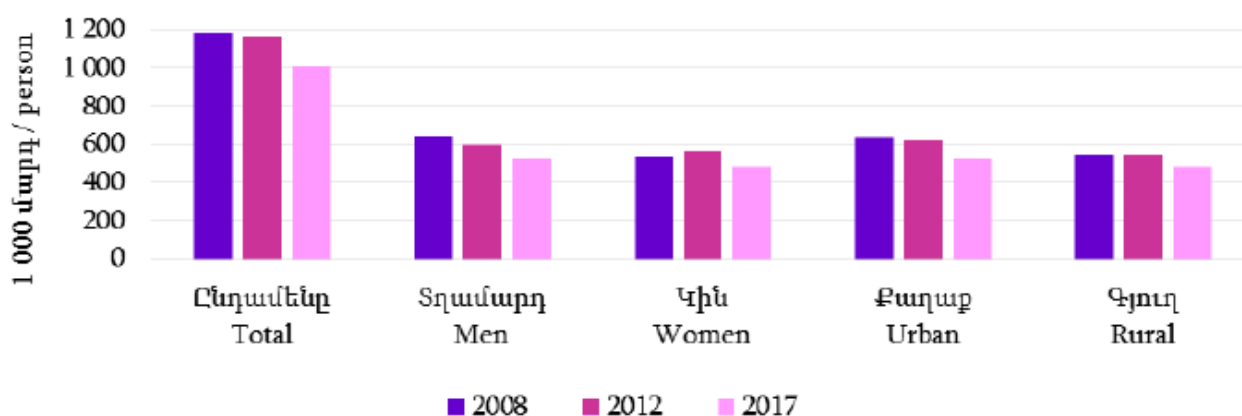


Figure 3. Changes of employment over years (ARMSTAT, 2018).

FGD: Villagers considered most vulnerable those who do not have a job in state organizations. Economic vulnerability is considered for both sexes.

This gender analysis serves as an attempt to identify key issues contributing to gender inequalities and possible solutions, so that they can be properly addressed. This work provides the basis for gender mainstreaming in future programs.