

Abstract

Changes in Agriculture and Rural Areas and the Direction of Gender–Sensitive Policy

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Amid growing attention on gender equality across Korean society, awareness on the importance of gender equality is also heightening among rural populations. However, the level of gender equality in rural society is in fact very low, and is remarkably lower compared to urban areas.

Gender inequality can increase the burden on the person concerned and cause conflicts with those around them. Furthermore, it is also linked to the macroscopic direction of agriculture and rural areas. In the process of rural changes, gender inequality has been maintained, deepened and transformed, while gender gaps in burden, status and

power are highly likely to have a decisive effect on the reproduction of agriculture and rural areas.

In this regard, it should be noted that the trend of the feminization of the agricultural workers has recently been reversed. Amid the downward trend of the agricultural workforce, the decline in female farmers, especially in the core age group, is more remarkable, thus exacerbating the crisis of reproduction in agriculture and rural areas.

Gender equality in rural development has been an important part of the agenda at the international level since the 1970s. During the early stages the women-centered approach known as the WID(Women in Development) was pursued, targeting to ease some of the difficulties faced by rural women. However, the WID approach has been criticized for bringing about little change to the unequal reality itself. To address these limitations, the gender-based approach, GAD(Gender and Development) was pursued since the late 1980s, focusing on gender disparity and gender inequality, encompassing both men and women.

While the paradigm has shifted to the gender-based approach at the international level, the woman-centered approach remains predominant at the domestic level. Research on female farmers have addressed some issues that required attention in terms of gender inequality, including the female farmers' status in the family farm and related institutions, but paid little attention to gender gaps in agricultural labor, family life, communities, and agricultural policies.

The policy for female farmers, a key pillar of the policies on gender equality in agriculture and rural areas, is also focused on the women-centered approach, while the policy agenda based on the gender perspective is still limited. On the other hand, in terms of gender equality policy aimed at promoting gender equality across society including the agricultural sector and rural areas, the issues of

gender equality in agriculture, and differences in the levels of gender equality between urban and rural areas have not even been adopted as part of the policy agenda.

Against this background, this study identified the state of agriculture and rural areas in terms of gender and uncovered female farmers' experiences of inequality. Additionally, it specified the gender equality agenda to be addressed at the policy level from a future-oriented perspective by predicting gender equality issues in the process of change in agriculture and rural areas. In addition, this study sought the possibility of gender equality in agriculture and rural areas by capturing farmers' awareness on the unequal reality, actions taken to promote gender equality, and obstacles in the process of practice. Based on this, policy directions were established and implementation measures were developed to address the unequal reality and improve the level of gender equality in agriculture and rural areas.

Research areas: social issues, women

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