

Women Participation in Commercial Seed Producers Group in Timor-Leste

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Abstract

Recognising the role of women in commercial seed production, their participation was examined in commercial seed producers groups established by Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Timor-Leste. From the assessment of 58 commercial seed producers groups, results revealed that women participation in membership was 36%, while in leadership positions such as Chief, Vice Chief, Secretary and Treasurer were 16%, 14%, 21% and 81%, respectively. Results suggest that although women participation in Treasurer position was highly satisfactory, more efforts are required in future from MAF extension workers to educate men to cooperate as well as encourage women to come forward to take more participation of women in membership as well as other key leadership positions - such as Chief, Vice Chief and Secretary - in the groups.

I. Introduction



Women play important role in seed production of major staple crops like maize, paddy and peanuts. Their involvement include: preparation of land, sowing seed, weeding, harvesting, seed selection, drying

and packaging. Men's involvement includes, fencing of seed plot, land preparation, weeding, transportation of produce from field to seed house and marketing of seeds. Although participation of both women and men are critical for success

II. Methods



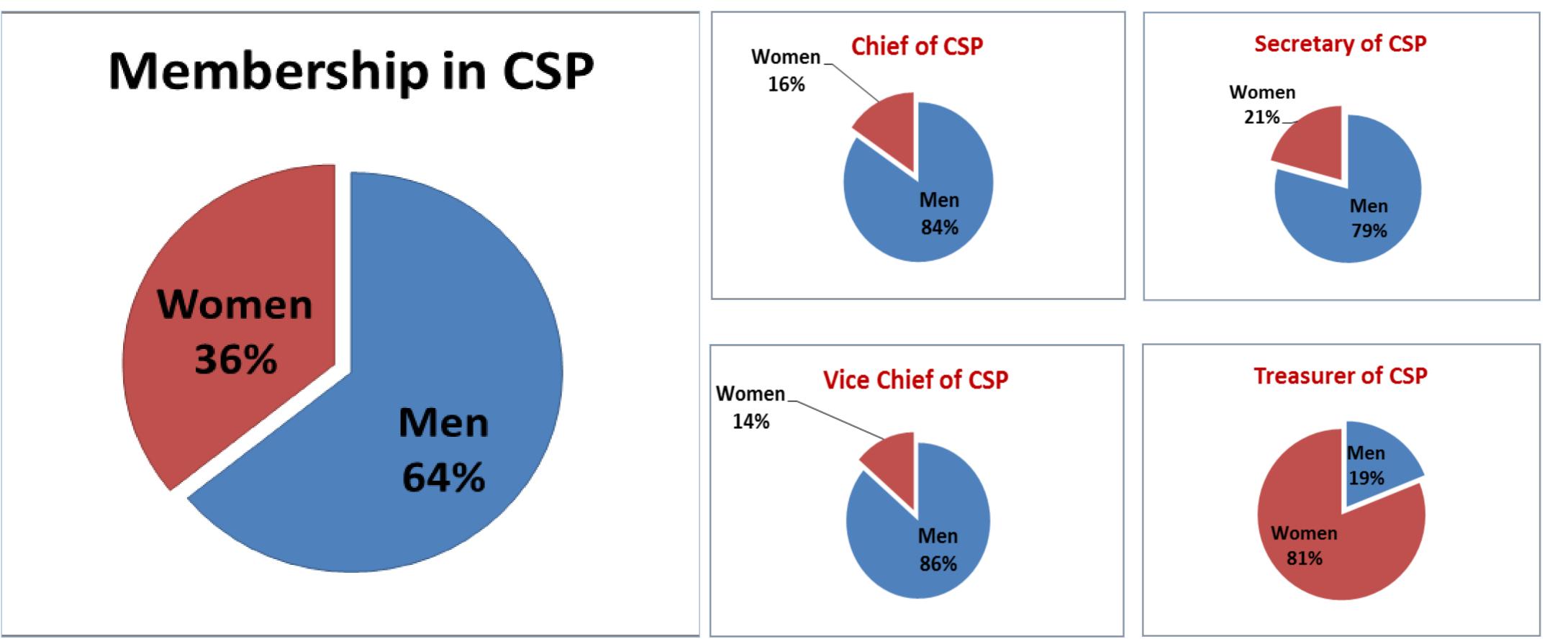
Gender disaggregated data of men and women collected

from MAF Community Seed Coordinators from all municipalities including a Special Region Oecusse regarding membership, and leadership positions such as Chief, Vice Chief, Secretary and Treasurer from 58 CSPs in 2015 and analysed.

of commercial seed producers, there are differences in men and women participation in Commercial Seed Producers (CSP) as members and leaders. This paper presents status of women participation in commercial seed producers group in membership and leadership positions.

III. Results

Data from 58 Commercial Seed Producers who were active in seed production in 2015 revealed that 36% of members in Commercial Seed Producers are women. Likewise, women participation in key leadership positions such as Chief, Vice Chief, Secretary and Treasurer were 16%, 14%, 21%, and 81%, respectively.



IV. Discussion



Women participation in commercial seed producers as members has exceeded the MAF target of including women at least 30% in farmers groups and associations. However, participation of women in key leadership positions such as Chief, Vice Chief and Secretary has still been very poor. In these positions, men dominate the seats. Although women have lower literacy and numeracy skills, they have been trusted by the CSPs men and women members as a Treasurer in more than 80% of the Commercial Seed Producers. More efforts are required in future from MAF extension workers to educate men to cooperate as well as encourage women to come forward to take more leadership positions such as Chief, Vice Chief and Secretary. In doing so, can increase quality participation of women in commercial seed producers groups.