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**Gender Statistics for Agricultural and Rural Development**

**in**

**the Asia-Pacific Region: Past Perspectives and Futures Prospects**

# Gender Statistics for Agricultural and Rural Development in the Asia-Pacific Region: Past Perspectives and Future Prospects<sup>1</sup>

John Curry (ESW), FAO

## Abstract

*For nearly the last two decades, the FAO has been active in the area of gender statistics for agriculture and rural development within the framework of its corporate goal of improving the use of gender and population factors in agricultural statistics. The Organization has attempted to achieve this through collaboration between its Statistics and its Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Divisions, working with member countries to build capacity of national statistical programmes to incorporate gender and population factors into agricultural censuses and surveys.*

*Such collaboration has taken place during two rounds of the World Census of Agriculture Programme and reflects the shift in focus away from Women in Development to a Gender and Development perspective that places greater emphasis on the roles, responsibilities, resource use and benefits for both women and men in agricultural production, processing and marketing. This paper explores the implications of this shift for future work in gender statistics for agriculture and rural development in the Asia-Pacific region through a selective review of the FAO approach to gender statistics, past activities in the Asia-Pacific region, and future directions for gender statistics in the current round of the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture (WCA) and CountrySTAT. The paper argues that present and future work on agricultural planning in the region will benefit considerably, and the policy relevance of agricultural statistics will be enhanced, through greater attention to the gender aspects in collection of agriculture statistics.*

## Introduction

There can be little doubt that those attending this conference are acutely aware of the increasing demand being placed on national statistical system for socially-relevant and reliable statistics, including sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive indicators. Much of this demand currently occurs within the context of international mandates for gender equality such as the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 (UN 1995) and, importantly, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), which set time-bound targets and indicators. In the Asia-Pacific region, for example, the Jakarta Declaration on Gender Equality and Aid Effectiveness has called upon the governments and partners to implement gender-responsive planning and performance-based monitoring with harmonized, gender indicators, through improved collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and other relevant information (UNIFEM 2007: 6).

Most gender statistical work has focussed on areas and issues such as population, health, education, employment—both formal and informal—gender-based violence, political participation and time-use<sup>2</sup>. However, the gender dimension of agricultural statistics is often neglected by not only agricultural statisticians, but by gender statistics specialists as well. Agriculture continues to play an important

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<sup>2</sup> For example, in the UN publication, *The World's Women 2005*, reviewed the status of official statistics on women, focussing on statistics related to population, health, education and work, as well as relatively newer areas, such as violence against women; poverty; power and decision-making; and human rights (DESA 2006: vii).

role in rural economies - in most developing countries it is the key sector - and its impact on the landscape, the environment and rural amenities is critical. Since gender issues form an important component of the social context in rural areas, sex-disaggregated statistics on the structure of the agricultural sector (both large-scale commercial and the small farm sector) and the agricultural labour force from farm and rural household surveys are becoming increasingly important for both agricultural and rural policy formulation.

For nearly twenty years, the FAO has responded to this data gap in both agricultural and gender statistics through a collaboration of two of its divisions<sup>3</sup> and national statistical systems in member countries to build capacity at national level by providing training and technical support in gender and statistics for ministries of agriculture and central statistics offices. Much of the work of this collaboration has varied in scope and intensity across global regions, and has occurred within the framework of both the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture (WCA) and the changing context of dominant analytical approaches to gender in development studies. This paper examines the FAO work on gender statistics in the Asia-Pacific region with reference to these frameworks and contexts. It presents a very brief discussion of the change in development thinking from Women in Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD) perspectives and the implications of this shift for work in gender statistics in agriculture. It then describes the FAO approach to gender and agricultural statistics, the past work in the Asia-Pacific region and the gender-relevant features of the WCA 2010 approach. It concludes with a discussion of future prospects for adding value to agricultural statistics in the region through greater attention to gender aspects within the framework of FAO programmes, especially the WCA 2010 Round and the CountrySTAT.

## **From Women in Development to Gender and Development**

Throughout the years, there has been a progression in thinking from a focus on Women in Development (WID), in which women's practical/basic needs or economic empowerment are specially targeted, to a Gender and Development (GAD) perspective, which takes into account the division of work and benefits between women and men. This latter perspective aims for a conscious redistribution of these not only in productive activities but also within the household<sup>4</sup>.

Gender analysis is a cornerstone of the GAD approach and helps to overcome the shortcomings of the earlier WID perspective by differentiating between needs and interests of both men and women. As Skutsch (1995) noted, gender analysis involves the collection of gender-disaggregated data from a variety of sources on a wide range of topics. These topics include:

- The physical location and type of economy
- The different groups within the community (class divisions, ethnic and/or religious minorities)
- Demographic data (e.g., family size, age pyramids education level, etc.)
- Living conditions and technology available
- The normal roles of men and women, children and old people as regards task distributions, including the hours worked by different family members on different tasks and distribution of these through out the day and year
- Exceptions to the task distribution (in the case of widows, unmarried mothers and other female headed households)
- Access to and control of resources (land, money, credit, machines etc.)
- Legal and actual land holding situation rights to use communal or state land and forests
- Financial situation

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<sup>3</sup> That is; the Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESW) and the Statistics Division (ESS).

<sup>4</sup> For a useful discussion of the differences between WID and GAD, and its consequences for natural resources relevant for the Asia-Pacific region, see Skutsch 1995.

- Household budget data
- Membership of community organizations, including the existence of women's groups
- Observations on general problems facing: the community, women in particular and gender behaviour in general

(Skutsch 1995)

In the early 1990s, the focus of FAO's work in gender and agricultural/rural statistics was clearly situated within the Women in Development framework. For example, a paper on alternative data sources for rural women's work in agriculture noted in its introduction that:

The failure to recognize much of the work which women do is therefore a failure to take women into account in all these areas. . . . New data on women gathered at sub-national level therefore will provide the kind of information needed to develop gender-sensitive policies, gender-responsive programme plans and gender-just distribution of benefits. This will enhance rural women's status by recognizing their value, but more than that for economists it will have a dual impact of facilitating the clear articulation of gender issues and thereby providing the basis for sound remedial policy and planning initiatives. Such therefore is not only for the sake of women but for the sake of agriculture and food security in the years to come.

(APCAS 1994b)

By the late 1990s, in part through efforts made to mainstream gender during the 1990 Round of the WCA, this focus on rural women's work was shifting to include a concern for collection of these data with respect to rural men as well. In her paper on a gender data base for agriculture and resource management policies in the Pacific Island Countries, Booth argues that it is necessary to understand the status of women as compared to men and that this requires the availability of relevant information (Booth 1999). In the early part of this decade, FAO became committed to a Gender and Development perspective through adoption of its two successive Gender and Development Plans of Action (2002-2007; 2008-2013). This commitment is reflected in more recent training materials in what was called Gender-disaggregated Data (GDD), the gender focus of which refers to the social differences between women and men, i.e. the different responsibilities of women and men in a given culture or location. Such roles of women and men are learned and they change (FAO-SDW 2004).

### **The FAO Approach to gender Statistics in Agriculture**

The overall goal of FAO regarding gender statistics has been to improve the use of gender and population factors in agricultural statistics. The Organization has attempted to achieve this by working with member countries to build capacity of national statistical programmes to incorporate gender and population factors into agricultural censuses and surveys. Strategic elements of this collaboration with member countries include:

- Production of technical guidelines and training materials for gender and statistics to support data production and use;
- Sensitisation/Training of both producers and users (actual and/or potential) in gender issues, concepts and tools for the production, analysis and use of sex-disaggregated data;
- Technical Support to agricultural censuses/surveys in Gender principally within the framework of technical support to the World Census of Agriculture ( FAO 2005a);
- Recoding/retabulation of existing data to produce sex-disaggregated data sets, especially for use in policy decision-support provided by FAO and
- Preparation of sex-disaggregated data bases/data sets, for inclusion in larger data bases, such as FAOSTAT.

The ESW/ESS collaboration has been active in these strategic areas since the 1990s, with greater or lesser emphasis placed on particular elements over time in responses to changes in human and other resources devoted to the overall strategy. Such shifts are beyond the scope of this paper.

## **FAO Gender and Agricultural Statistics Activities in the Asia-Pacific Region**

The FAO approach to gender statistics has evolved due to a considerable amount of activity both at headquarters and in the regions. Although interest and support for this has been particularly strong in the Africa region, a wide range of activities can also be documented for the other regions. This is certainly true for the Asia-Pacific region, where an examination of available FAO sources reveals both geographic and topical breadth of coverage.

**Production of technical guidelines and training materials:** As already noted in this paper, much of the early work on gender statistics in agriculture in the region that can be documented focused on advocacy and guidelines for improving the visibility of women in agricultural statistics. Examples of this include the two WID-oriented papers presented to APCAS in 1994 on alternative data sources for women's work in agriculture and statistics on women obtained from agricultural censuses and surveys (APCAS 1994a, 1994b), and Booth's paper on a gender data base for agriculture and resource management policies in the Pacific Island Countries (Booth 1999).

**Sensitisation/Training:** Since 2000, ESW has conducted training in the production and use of what was then referred to as Gender-disaggregated Data and indicators (GDD). The principle target groups for these materials are agricultural statisticians and policy analysts, as well as programme planners for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Member Countries. Originally developed in English as part of a training programme for four African countries, these training materials have been translated into other languages (i.e., Spanish, Portuguese, French, Russian and Arabic), adapted for local use and used in Europe, Latin America and Central Asia. To date, 255 persons (137 women; 118 men) have been trained using these materials in thirteen workshops. A GDD workshop using these materials was held in **India** in 2004 in collaboration with the Centre for Studies on Gender Concerns in Agriculture (CSGCA), the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU). The overall goal of the workshop was to work together in seeking to understand the importance of gender disaggregated data analysis in gender-sensitive agricultural development planning and provided fourteen participants from Directorates of Agriculture and Economics/Statistics from Kerala State, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu State with an opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills of Gender Analysis and to reflect on ways to incorporate gender concepts and tools in their institutions through practical follow-up activities.

**Technical Support to agricultural censuses/surveys in Gender:** ESW and ESS have collaborated on several agricultural censuses in the region at various stages of the census process. As part of the FAO technical support to first National Census in **China** Project, the Service Chief of the then-Gender and Development Service (SDWW) presented a paper on the visibility of the role of rural women through an analysis of gender-disaggregated census data to a project seminar in September 2000. In the paper, gender-disaggregated data available in key areas such as education and labour force were analysed, revealing a trend towards feminization and ageing of the rural population. The analysis found that the situation is further compounded by a still high rate of illiteracy among women, their low access to educational facilities and to off-farm activities. The high rate of illiteracy and semi-illiteracy is shown in Figure 1 in the Appendix, where nearly seventy percent of the economically-active household members over age seven who were illiterate or semi-literate were women (Randriamamonjy 2000).

In **Myanmar** in 2003, the technical support provided by the ESW regional officer posted at the FAO regional office in Bangkok resulted in sex-disaggregated tables being included in the census report. The terminal statement for the FAO assistance project noted that many gender-related questions involving the measurement of the contributions of males and females to the different components of farming operations were addressed (FAO 2005b). Figure 2 in the Appendix, showing the distribution of male and female holders by age categories, is derived from these data. Overall, female holders represent about 15% of the total, ranging from 11% in the 35-44 years age category to 23% of holders aged 65 years or more. It is interesting to note that, while the modal category for male holders is the 35-44 years age group, it is the 45-54 years age group for female holders, with higher percentages of female holders than male holders coming from the two highest age categories (i.e., 55-64, 65+ years).

Also, the ESW regional officer presented a paper on gender issues at the agricultural census seminar in Malaysia in October, 2004. Existing sex-disaggregated agricultural and labour force data were evaluated and the awareness of the census team in gender issues in agriculture was raised by the seminar. ESW technical support for gender has been programmed for the on-going agricultural census project in Vanuatu, although no information on this is currently available.

**Recoding/retabulation of existing data**; the reanalysis from a gender perspective of data from the China agricultural census has already been noted. In Viet Nam in 2001-2, the ESW regional officer participated in the re-analysis of data from the 1997-1998 Vietnam Living Standards Survey to investigate the agricultural situation of women in Vietnam. The analysis found that the average Vietnamese farm cultivates 7,024 square meters of land. However, female-operated farms cultivate only 54 percent of the land area cultivated by male-operated farms. As shown in Figure 3 in the Appendix (Figure 7 in the report) female-operated farms not only cultivate less land area than male-operated farms; they also cultivate less land per adult household member (61 percent of the per-adult land area of male-operated farms). Farm profits of female-operated farms, however are only 62 percent of those of male-operated ones and are the result primarily of lower amounts of land cultivated (FAO-VNM 2002.).

In 2004 in Malaysia, the ESW regional officer commissioned a study on the status of Malaysian women in the economy using information from the Malaysian Labour Force survey and various cross-sectional studies completed on women in Malaysia. Figure 4 in the Appendix (Figure 6 in the report) shows the percentage distribution of employed persons in agricultural occupations by sex for 1995. Among women working in the agriculture sector, more than half were employed in fruits and related trees and shrub crops, followed by field crops and vegetable farming. Looking at the proportion of male and female workers in each occupational category in agriculture, there was a higher participation of women employed compared to men as field crops and vegetable farm workers. The number of women employed as farm machinery operators was minimal. These findings were reported to the agricultural census workshop in October of 2004 (Balakrishnan 2004).

### **Future Approaches: WCA 2010 and CountrySTAT**

The World Programme for the Census of Agriculture (WCA) is a ten-yearly, world-wide programme of agricultural censuses promoted by FAO that involves well over 100 participating countries. In the current round (WCA 2010), which covers the period of 2006-2015, the programme has been broadened to present the agricultural census within the framework of the agricultural statistics system. The WCA 2010 has two components; the Agricultural census itself, that provides basic structural data and sampling frames for agricultural surveys usually through a complete enumeration of agricultural holdings, and; the Agricultural survey programme, which covers the various ongoing and in-depth sample surveys to be undertaken after the agricultural census, using the census as a frame. FAO recommends two types of census data items

- Primary items, which are a limited set of key data items suitable for complete enumeration that provide:
  - Key data required by countries.
  - Information to help construct sampling frames for agricultural surveys.
  - Data for international comparisons.
  - Data required for fine geographical and other detailed levels.
- Secondary items, which are additional items suitable for enumeration by sample surveys that countries may wish to include as a supplement to the main census or for sampling frame purposes.

(FAO 2005a)

Gender is included in the list of themes in census recommendations. Under this schema, the minimal core data items for inclusion are the sex of the holder (0003) and the age of the holder (0004). This will allow for not only tabulation of these features of the holding, but also cross-tabulation with other features of the recommended core data set (FAO 2005a).

An added feature of WCA 2010 of potential interest for gender analysis is the inclusion of the concepts of the sub-holding and sub-holder (FAO 2005a). A **sub-holding** is defined as a single agricultural activity or group of activities (e.g., a field, a plot, a livestock operation, etc.) managed by a particular person or group of persons in the holder's household on behalf of the agricultural holder. There may be one or more than one sub-holding in a holding. A **sub-holder** is a person responsible for managing a sub-holding on the holder's behalf. There is only one sub-holder in a sub-holding, but there may be more than one sub-holder in a holding. The sub-holder concept is broadly similar to the concepts of "plot manager" and "farm operator" used in some countries. During the 2000 Round of WCA (1996-2005), the sub-holder concept was found to be useful in Sub-Saharan Africa, where it was tried out in several censuses on an experimental basis. Details of this are beyond the scope of this paper; however, the reader should consult the FAO regional report on the subject for details (FAO-RAF 2005).

Tempelman (2008) in her recent presentation on the collection of sex-disaggregated data in agricultural censuses noted that among the major achievements of the WCA 2000 Round was the increased collection of sex-disaggregated data over previous rounds. This work illustrated the relevance of:

- Detailed analysis of demographic data
- Data presentation at sub-national level
- Analysis and presentation of data at sub-holding level (especially in the African region)

She offered a series of best practises recommended for the African region that could be used under various census themes during the WCA 2010 Round. These included:

- Demographic data agricultural population: Average size and dependency ratio of agricultural households by sex of Head of Household at regional and national level
- Access to productive resources, land & animals: at holding or plot level, including the sex of manager, individual or collective plot manager; for livestock: Agricultural holdings by type of animal and by sex of holder; ownership of animals by type and by sex of owner
- Destination of agricultural produce: example: Crop usage proportions (percentages consumed, used for seed, sold, wages in kind, animal feed, etc.)
- Labour and time-use: Example: How much time do men and women in the household spend on selected agricultural activities?
- Poverty indicators: Problems satisfying household food needs;

For Tempelman, the principal challenges remaining for future gender work within the framework of the WCA 2010 include:

- Increase analysis of sex-disaggregated data
- Integrate sex-disaggregated data into FAOSTAT and CountrySTAT
- Increase use of sex-disaggregated data in policy-making, implementation and impact assessment
- Produce progress & impact indicators
- Improve data collection on labour

(Tempelman 2008)

CountrySTAT is a statistical framework and applied information system for analysis and policy-making to organise, integrate and disseminate statistical data and metadata on food and agriculture coming from different sources. CountrySTAT gathers and harmonises scattered institutional statistical

information so that information tables become compatible with each other at the country level and with data at the international level. Current plans are to develop later in the year a framework for a gender statistics module that would be compatible with the gender statistics under WCA and integrate this into the CountrySTAT and FAOSTAT information systems.

## **Conclusion:**

This paper has discussed the importance of, on the one hand, incorporating a gender perspective in agricultural statistics and, on the other hand, including an agricultural/rural dimension in the field of Gender Statistics. It has also briefly summarised the theoretical transition in development thinking from WID to GAD, the FAO approach to gender statistics for agricultural and rural development and some of FAO's activities in this area in the Asia-Pacific region that can at present be documented. The activities reviewed have focussed largely on the analysis of available data on rural women, including in some instances (e.g., China, Myanmar) data from agricultural censuses and surveys. With its attention to highlighting the situation of rural women in order to make them more visible to development planners and policy makers, this body of work falls somewhere between the classic WID and the GAD perspectives and has laid the groundwork for future analyses of gender relations and their consequences for agricultural and rural policy formulation.

In retrospect, the body of statistical work presented here can be seen as adopting a somewhat opportunistic case study approach, where existing data at hand are analysed for a set of limited objectives. That some of this work has been done within the context of the national agricultural census—either for the user-producer workshop at the beginning of the process or the seminars towards the end—adds some continuity to the effort.

What is needed is a systematic plan to build on such case study work in the region. I would argue that, from the FAO perspective, a synergy between the Organisation's WCA and CountrySTAT programmes would give overall coherence to such work within the region. The two programmes are distinct, yet complimentary. The ten-year focus of WCA, with its emphasis on the agricultural census and associated surveys, when coupled with re-analyses of earlier censuses and surveys, will help to establish benchmark data on gender aspects of the structure of the agricultural (particularly the household) sector. The integrative feature of CountrySTAT, which harmonises data from a variety of sources, would allow for a gender module that would include sex-disaggregated data items that would need to be measured at more regular intervals, such as the rural economically active population (agriculture versus other employment, agriculture employment and agriculture unemployment, etc.). Through CountrySTAT, these data could then be fed more easily into the gender framework in FAOSTAT, making access to, and use of, such data quicker and easier for policy makers, as has been the case for agricultural statistical data in general in the Philippines (Lizarondo and Jalisan 2007: 10).

Such a system could well provide the framework needed for the collection, representation and gender analysis of statistics on rural women and men required for evidence-based policy formulation, as well as for other important statistical services, such as measuring the progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and other international conventions. Where required, training in the analysis of sex-disaggregated agricultural data, similar to those established in other regions<sup>5</sup>, should be considered. Finally, it is my hope that such a synergistic framework would promote intra-regional sharing of experiences and 'best practices' through mechanisms such as APCAS to help build a community of practice for improving the use of gender and population factors in agricultural statistics in the Asia-Pacific region.

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<sup>5</sup> See Curry and Tempelman 2006 for an overview of the ESW support to gender statistics, including training.

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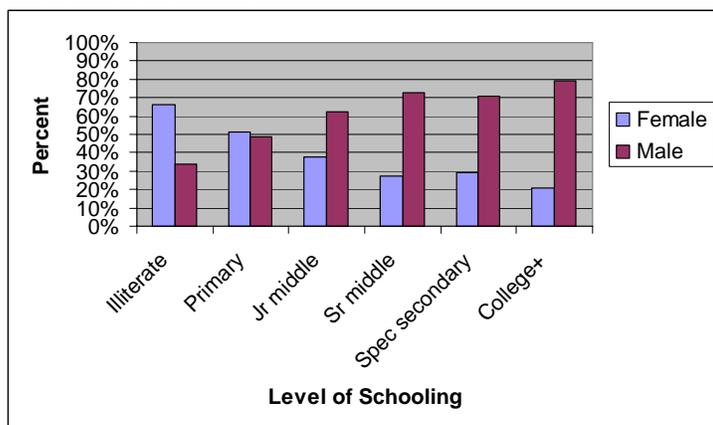
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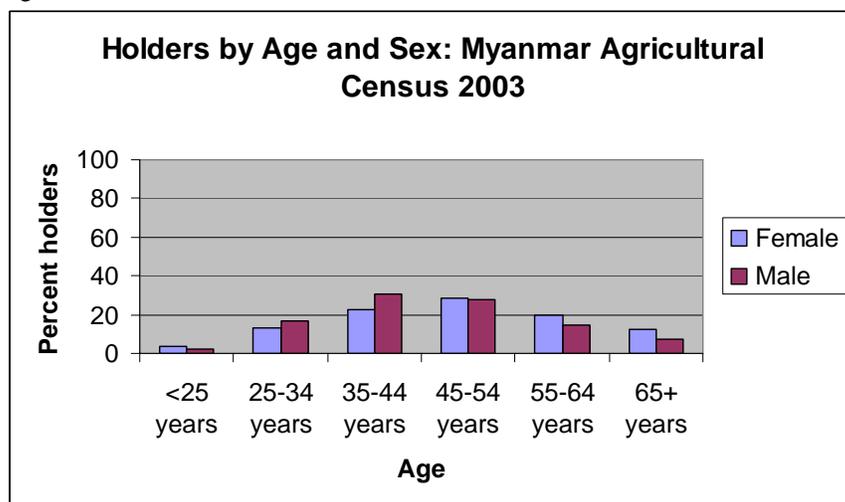
## Annex – Figures

**Figure 1. Household holdings: Number of persons aged 7 years and over engaged in economic activities by sex and educational level**



Data Source: Randriamamonjy 2000

Figure 2.



Data source: WCA Data Summaries

Figure 3.

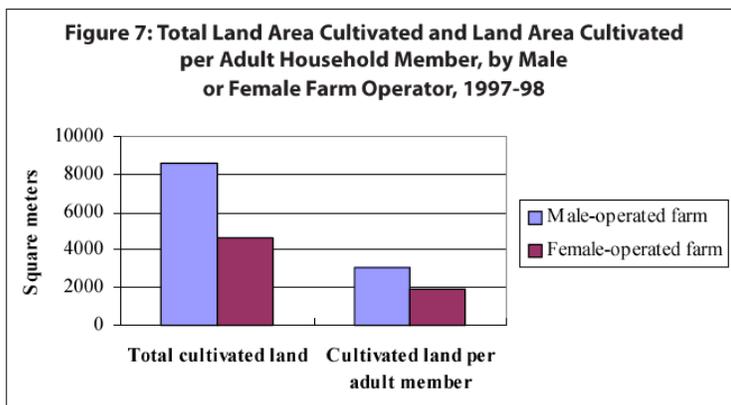
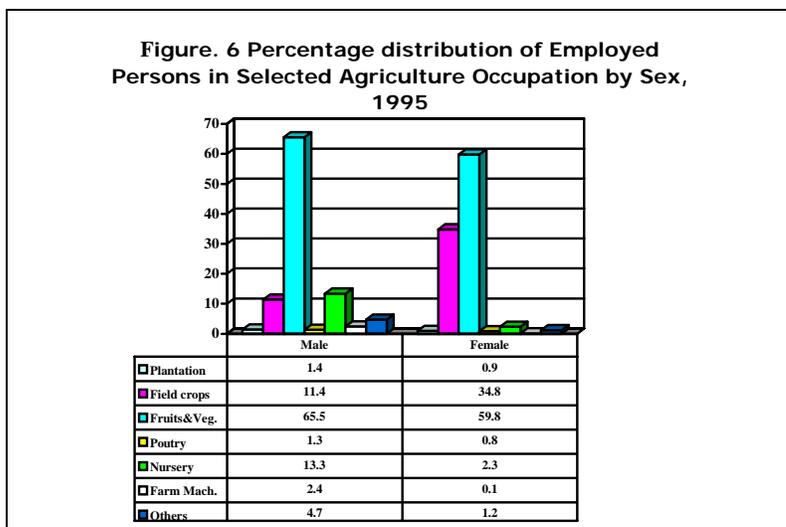


Figure 4.



Source: Balakrishnan 2004.