

# Gender needs awareness and gender asymmetry: an analysis of a rural women survey in mountainous areas of south-eastern Spain<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The integration of gender symmetry in rural areas is no longer a choice but an obligation in the design and implementation of rural development programmes and projects. Some European initiatives (NOW, EQUAL, LEADER, etc.) have already been taken to improve rural women's opportunities to participate more actively in economic and public life. In this context, surveying and the data collection will be considered an important preliminary step in the implementation of gender symmetry-focused development policies. In this paper, after a brief comment of the different gender paradigms in rural development, some results of a survey conducted on 304 rural women living in mountainous rural areas of the province of Granada (Southern Spain) are presented. The position of rural women as regards employment, family, socio-cultural, institutional matters, etc., and the level of connection with agricultural sector and opinions about farming occupations are described. Then women's perception and awareness regarding both practical and strategic gender needs in the area are analysed. Factors related to how women stand with respect to gender needs have been identified using the probit regression model. From the above results, some conclusions have finally been drawn that could be helpful for designing strategies to achieve a better level of gender symmetry in the region, focusing sustainable rural development on a «gender planning» approach.

**Additional key words:** Andalusia, gender and development, rural areas, rural development, rural woman.

## Resumen

### Percepción de las necesidades y asimetría de género: análisis en zonas rurales de montaña del sureste de España

La incorporación de la igualdad de género en las zonas rurales es ya un objetivo obligado en el diseño e implementación de programas y proyectos de desarrollo de la Unión Europea. Se han desarrollado algunas iniciativas comunitarias (NOW, EQUAL, LEADER, etc.) para dar mayor oportunidad a las mujeres rurales con el fin de participar activamente en la economía y la esfera pública. En este trabajo, tras unos breves comentarios sobre el tema de género en el desarrollo y sus distintos enfoques y paradigmas, se abordan algunos aspectos de la problemática de género en varias comunidades rurales del macizo Bético, situadas todas ellas en la provincia de Granada (Sur de España), en las que se aplican actualmente políticas de desarrollo que contienen, implícita o explícitamente, en alguna medida, objetivos de género. Sobre la base de la información generada por un sondeo a mujeres rurales en la zona mencionada, se presenta la situación de la mujer rural desde distintos enfoques (familiar, cultural, social, laboral, etc.) y se analiza el grado de vinculación de la mujer con el sector agrario y su opinión sobre las profesiones agroganaderas. Asimismo, se estudia la percepción y prioridad de las mujeres rurales respecto a las necesidades prácticas y/o estratégicas de género en sus comunidades, identificando los factores que influyen en dicha prioridad, mediante la estimación de un modelo Probit multinomial ordenado. Finalmente, se extraen algunas conclusiones que pueden ayudar al diseño de procesos de desarrollo sostenible con enfoque de género en zonas desfavorecidas del Sur del Mediterráneo.

**Palabras clave adicionales:** Andalucía, desarrollo rural, mujer y desarrollo, mujer rural, zonas rurales.

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Received: 15-10-07; Accepted: 20-05-08.

<sup>1</sup> A previous version of this work has been presented as contributed paper at the XI<sup>th</sup> Congress of the EAAE (European Association of Agricultural Economists), «The Future of Rural Europe in the Global Agri-Food System». Copenhagen, Denmark, August 23-27, 2005.

## Introduction

The subject of gender is an increasingly important component of rural development policies all over the world, despite logical differences of intensity and focus deriving from dissimilar economic situations and sociocultural distinctions. Concern for gender in development is motivated by a number of reasons, not the least important of which is that much of the potential related to the endogenous resources that can be mustered in rural societies is linked to the gender roles in force in the sociocultural system of the respective local community. This means that many of the products and services that rural society can offer markets are traditionally made or provided by women. Other reasons would be a growing trend within society to address gender problems generally, women's adaptation to deagrarianisation and rural change in the developed countries and the extreme poverty and marginalisation suffered by women in developing countries (Calatrava-Requena, 2002).

Gender studies date back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, although research into the issue of the development of rural societies is much more recent, and the work of Boserup (1970) is considered as the starting-point for the various scientific paradigms on gender in development that now exist. Calatrava-Requena (1997) identifies and analyses the nature of the different types of research produced prior to the seventies on the subject of gender in development, which he groups under the umbrella term «preparadigmatic approaches». Albeit frequent, these investigations are somewhat disorganised, and 1970 can be considered as the date of birth of the approaches and paradigms related to gender in development.

Since then, scientists have provided more and more input on the subject of gender in development, and the literature published over the last 30 years is plenteous, gender in development now being a key issue in research into rural development. Some of these works are listed in the references section.

In Spain, García-Ferrando (1977) published one of the pioneering works on rural women and their gender role from various viewpoints (employment, sector, etc.) printed as of the mid-seventies, many of which

addressed women in agriculture (Calatrava-Requena and Vericat, 1987; Porto-Vázquez *et al.*, 1991; García-Bartolomé, 1992, 1999, 2001; García-Ramón, 1993, 1997; Granados and Calatrava-Requena, 1993; Ruiz-Arias, 1993; MAPA, 1995; Sampedro-Gallego, 1996, 2000; Mellado *et al.*, 1997; Silvestre *et al.*, 1998; García-Santiago and Azuboeta, 1999; Vera and Rivera, 1999; Prados Velasco, 2000; Cámara, 2002; and others). Aguiar *et al.* (2001) reflect the evolution of women situation en Andalusia (Spain) between 1990 and 2000. García-Bartolomé *et al.* (2002) offers a critical and detailed analysis of the documentary production on rural women in Spain from 1992 to 2002. Despite the diversity of the research, there is no denying that studies describing or analysing global or sectorial gender differences are much more abundant than studies dealing with the subject of gender in development from the viewpoint of its theoretical foundations. García-Ramón and Baylina (2000) review many of the works on gender related to the rural world in Europe and Spain.

From the theoretical viewpoint, there are basically four paradigms for addressing gender in development: Women in Development (WID) (Moser, 1993; Whatmore, 1994; FAO, 2002); Gender and Development (GAD) (Moser, 1989; Baele, 1990; Ostergaard, 1992); Women, Environment, Development (WED) (Agarwal and Narain, 1985; Dankelman and Davidson, 1988; Agarwal, 1989, 1992; Brow, 1991; Buechner, 1991; Braidotti *et al.*, 1995; Sachs, 1996), and Gender Planning (GP) (Moser, 1989, 1993; Levy, 1991; Hannan, 1992; Kabeer, 1992).

In earlier papers (Calatrava-Requena, 1997, 2002), discussed the gender paradigms and models that can be consulted, often only partially, in the mass of literature published since Boserup's pioneering work (1970), which usually qualifies as the earliest theoretical precedent of the original Women in Development gender paradigm. The bibliographical references include some works on the different paradigms and models, as well as some Spanish publications on gender, particularly concerning the rural milieu and agriculture.

Apart from the paradigmatic approach, gender and development theory is also sometimes specified by means of gender in development models, and the

following models can be identified in the specialised literature: welfare approach, equity approach, anti-poverty approach, efficiency approach, empowerment approach and environment sustainability approach. In the gender and development literature, there are not very many works that explain the essence and content of the different paradigms and models or the interrelationships between the two analytical approaches.

One variable whose achievement characterises the different gender paradigms are the so-called gender needs (Moser, 1993). Therefore, the level of statement of gender needs is a key criterion for analysing gender symmetry in society. Despite this analytical importance, there are very few works, and none in Spain, that address the subject of gender needs from an empirical angle.

In this paper, which is part of the so-called Rural Women Project, some of the results of a survey of rural women in several rural communities in the province of Granada (South-eastern Spain) are described. After a few brief remarks on practical and strategic gender needs, the paper addresses some of the aspects of the gender issue in the area of the Andalusian Massif, where development policies that implicitly or explicitly contain some gender goals are now being applied. The above mentioned project was entered into by the Andalusian Institute of Agricultural Research and Training (IFAPA) and the Andalusian Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives (FAECA) to examine the reality of rural women in, aims to make up for the shortage of empirical research on the subject.

On the basis of the information generated by this survey, the position of rural women from different viewpoints (as regards family, cultural, social, employment, institutional matters, etc.) and the level of connection with agricultural sector and opinions about farming occupations are presented. Also, rural women's perception and prioritisation of practical and/or strategic gender needs in their communities are analysed, identifying the factors that influence this prioritisation by assessing an ordered multinomial Probit model.

Finally, from the results of the above analyses, some conclusions are drawn with respect to both the situation of gender asymmetry within the region and what factors would determine the social demand for meeting strategic gender needs to correct this asymmetry.

The underlying idea of the paper is original and new contribution in the gender scientific literature, since it is the first time that PGNs and SGNs have been used

as analytical tools for analysing the gender system of an area. The only previous work in this respect is performed by Calatrava-Requena *et al.* (2004) which can be considered a precedent of this paper, using a more reduced sample.

## **Practical and strategic gender needs (PGNs and SGNs)**

Apart from the very well-known and widely used basic concepts in gender in development theory, such as gender roles or gender asymmetry, there are other gender-related notions that are highly important for the purpose of analysis. These are the concepts of gender interests and needs. «Gender interests» are the interests that members of a sex (man or woman) may have by virtue of their position in society as a result of their gender role. Gender interests are stated by expressing what are known as gender needs, which are a key instrumental element for the practice of gender in development analysis (Calatrava-Requena, 2002).

Gender needs are either practical or strategic. Practical gender needs (PGNs) are needs that reflect what interests women (or men) have from their present gender role and do not aim to change the level of asymmetry in gender relations. PGNs do not generate social conflict. Moser (1993) indicates that the name «practical» is owed to their very nature, and they usually address shortages or problems of everyday life and/or work (health services, nursery schools, cooperative membership, water supply, etc.). The achievement of PGNs does not normally require changes in gender roles.

Strategic gender needs (SGNs), on the other hand, are needs that derive from gender interests whose attainment substantially alters gender roles and can, therefore, generate conflicts in relationships. They always aim at increasing gender symmetry or lessening situations of sex-linked dependency or subordination. Moser (1993) developed the issue of gender needs as a criterion of symmetry. SGNs usually refer to aspects related to the division of labour between genders, social control or participation in institutions. Moser identifies needs related to legal rights, violence in the home, equal wages for equivalent work, issues related to sex and freedom to conceive, etc., as SGNs. For more information on gender needs, see Moser (1993) and, in Spain, Calatrava-Requena (2002).

In the development process, gender needs will tend to be more strategic the higher the level of a commu-

nity's social development is, and the prioritisation of practical gender needs is a feature of stages of lower social development. At an early stage of stark asymmetry (and usually underdevelopment), prioritisation is basically of practical gender needs. The prioritisation of PGNs then falls progressively, and SGNs take their place, reaching a zenith in a situation of critical symmetry that might be referred to as the point of maximum intergender conflict. From here, moving towards hypothetical symmetry, the prioritisation of SGNs starts to descend until they peter out in a situation of hypothetical symmetry, whereas the PGNs, whose importance had dropped during this process, again begin to take some priority, unless they have all been met.

With respect to this process, it is interesting to find out in what situation of needs prioritisation a given community or society is at any one time, what factors characterise and/or influence the dynamics of the prioritisation process and to what extent these factors can be used to design strategic mechanisms to speed up the process. Despite the importance of this knowledge, analyses in this respect are extremely few and far between and there are practically none in Spain. This paper aims to be an exception to this rule.

## Methodology

The information used is obtained from 304 questionnaires filled in by rural women from the mountainous districts of the Andalusian Massif in South-eastern Spain. The surveys were conducted in 49 municipalities of the province of Granada (south-eastern Spain). The sample has been proportionally stratified according to population distribution (INE, 2007). Women have been contacted either at home or at work place using a pseudo-random scheme.

Although not all the information is drawn on here, the questionnaire used is exhaustive and covers a range of issues relating to the position of women in rural locations, divided into the following blocks of questions: 1. Labour force participation and socio-occupational status; 2. Participation in institutions; 3. Opinions and attitudes about rural development; 4. Needs of women in rural locations; 5. Welfare function. 6. Women's personal and family position.

The number of surveys conducted is sufficient for descriptive analyses and to infer relations, which is the basic concern of this paper. For any inferences of percentage populations, the sampling error was 5.73% for

intermediate proportions ( $p = q = 0.5$ ) and 2.5% for extreme proportions.

Having designed and tested the questionnaire, the survey was conducted during the months of May and November 2004. The survey was conducted by means of oral and direct interviews, approaching women in the street, at work, at home, etc.

For block 4, women were given a number of practical and strategic needs and were asked to prioritise and order the five they considered to be most important for improving their level of well-being and everyday life in their community.

To examine how rural women prioritise the practical and/or strategic gender needs in their respective communities and identify the factors that influence this prioritisation, an ordered multinomial Probit model was fitted. For this purpose, the dependent SGN variable from the five priorities chosen by the respondent was defined as follows:

- $SGN_i = 0$  if woman  $i$  prioritises 0 or 1 strategic needs.
- $SGN_i = 1$  if woman  $i$  prioritises 2 to 3 strategic needs.
- $SGN_i = 2$  if woman  $i$  prioritises 4 to 5 strategic needs.

The independent variables, which were originally taken into account to specify the ordered Probit model were: occupation (OCCUP), education level (EDUC), family unit (FAMU), age (AGE), purchase of newspapers within the household (PNEW), purchase of magazines (PMAG), reading of newspapers (READN), reading of books (READB), time spent watching the television (TV), membership of Women's Associations (MWOMA), contacts with the Institute of Women's Affairs (CONTIWA), perception of inequality in the household (INEQF), perception of inequality at work (INEQW), percentage priority allocated to investments in projects (economic: PROJECO, social: PROJSOC, cultural: PROJ CULT and/or environmental: PROJ ENV) to improve the well-being of rural society, perception of changes in the level of well-being of the community in the last 10 years (CHANGE), parenthood (CHILD) and monthly per capita disposable income (INCOME). Table 1 shows the different levels for each of the discrete independent variables used in the model.

As regards the programs for processing the questionnaire data, Microsoft for Windows Excel 98, the SPSS 12.0 program and Limdep 7.0 were used.

For word processing and other graphic tools, Word 2000 and Harvard Graphics 4.0 for Windows were used.

**Table 1.** Definition of the independent variables of the ordered multinomial Probit model

Independent variables	Description
OCUP-1	«1» if she is a wage-earner, «0» otherwise
OCUP-2	«1» if she is self-employed, «0» otherwise
OCUP-3	«1» if she is unemployed, «0» otherwise
OCUP-4	«1» if she is exclusively a housewife, «0» otherwise
OCUP-5	«1» if others (retired, student, etc.).
EDUC-1	«1» if she is unschooled or educated to lower than primary, «0» otherwise
EDUC-2	«1» if she is educated to primary level, «0» otherwise
EDUC-3	«1» if she is educated to upper secondary level or has vocational training, «0» otherwise
EDUC-4	«1» if she has higher education, «0» otherwise
FAMU-1	«1» if she lives alone of independent means, «0» otherwise
FAMU-2	«1» if she lives with her parents or other relations, «0» otherwise
FAMU-3	«1» if she lives with a partner, «0» otherwise
AGE	Age of respondent (years)
PNEW	«1» if newspapers are bought at home, «0» otherwise
PMAG-1	«1» if she often buys magazines, «0» otherwise
PMAG-2	«1» if she sometimes buys magazines, «0» otherwise
PMAG-3	«1» if she never buys magazines, «0» otherwise
READN-1	«1» if she reads the newspaper daily, «0» otherwise
READN-2	«1» if she sometimes reads newspapers, «0» otherwise
READN-3	«1» if she never reads newspapers, «0» otherwise
READB-1	«1» if she reads books every day, «0» otherwise
READB-2	«1» if she reads books at least every month, «0» otherwise
READB-3	«1» if she reads books at least every quarter, «0» otherwise
READB-4	«1» if she reads books at least once a year, «0» otherwise
READB-5	«1» if she seldom reads books, «0» otherwise
READB-6	«1» if she never reads books, «0» otherwise
MWOMA	«1» if she is a member of women's organisations, «0» otherwise
CONTIWA	«1» if she is in contact with the Institute of Women's Affairs, «0» otherwise
TV-1	«1» if she watches TV more than 4 hours a day, «0» otherwise
TV-2	«1» if she watches TV from 2 to 4 hours a day, «0» otherwise
TV-3	«1» if she watches TV less than 2 hours a day, «0» otherwise
TV-4	«1» if she never or seldom watches TV, «0» otherwise
INEQW-1	«1» if she perceives a lot of inequality at work, «0» otherwise
INEQW-2	«1» if she perceives quite a lot of inequality at work, «0» otherwise
INEQW-3	«1» if she does not perceive a lot of inequality at work, «0» otherwise
INEQW-4	«1» if she no perceives inequality at work, «0» otherwise
INEQF-1	«1» if she perceives a lot of inequality at home, «0» otherwise
INEQF-2	«1» if she perceives quite a lot of inequality at home, «0» otherwise
INEQF-3	«1» if she does not perceive a lot of inequality at home, «0» otherwise
INEQF-4	«1» if she no perceives inequality at home, «0» otherwise
PROJECO	Percentage priority allocated to investments in economic projects
PROJSOC	Percentage priority allocated to investments in social projects
PROJENV	Percentage priority allocated to investments in environmental projects
PROJCULT	Percentage priority allocated to investments in cultural projects
CHILD	«1» if she has children, «0» otherwise
CHANGE-1	«1» if she perceives a lot of changes in the village in terms of increased standard of living and welfare in the last 10 yr, «0» otherwise
CHANGE-2	«1» if she perceives some or a few changes in the village in terms of increased standard of living and welfare in the last 10 yr, «0» otherwise
CHANGE-3	«1» if she does not perceive any changes in the village in terms of increased standard of living and welfare in the last 10 yr, «0» otherwise
INCOME	Monthly per capita disposable income

## Results

### Rural women's age and family unit

Of the respondents, 63.8% women live with their partners and 17.4% with their parents. Only 5.9% live on their own, and the remainder have other family units. Of the respondents, 71.1% have children, the mean being 2.53 children per household. The most common household size is from 2 to 4 people, this size accounting for 64.2% of households. As regards the members of the household in employment, one or two people work outside the home in 85.5% of the respondents' households. With respect to net monthly income per household, over 50% have income levels ranging from 500 to 1,500 €.

As regards age, the distribution of the sample was as indicated in Table 2.

According to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, there is no significant difference ( $p > 0.05$ ) between the distribution by ages of the sample and rural women aged over 18 years in the survey target region (K-S statistic = 0.288675). This indicator tends to bear out sample randomness.

### Educational and agricultural training attainment

As regards educational attainment, 7.9% of women have higher education as opposed to 23.4% who are unschooled. Approximately, 6 out of every 10 women are educated to primary level or lower.

Hardly any women (0.7%) have attended agricultural courses, although almost 6 out of 10 (61.8%) have practical experience in agricultural work and over 35% do

not have any theoretical or practical agricultural training. This means that one out of every three rural women has had no contact whatsoever with agricultural activity.

The  $\chi^2$  test indicated that there is a very significant relationship ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) between educational attainment and age in the sense that the younger generations, aged primarily between 25 and 34 yr, have higher educational attainment. This contrasts with the generations aged over 55 yr, born just before 1950, who have not completed any educational cycle and among whom the proportion of illiteracy is also much higher than for the totality of rural women.

### Reading level and use of mass media

Although 33.9% say that a newspaper is bought daily at home, 82.8% of the rural women never read a newspaper or do so sporadically. As regards books, 46.3% never or very seldom read books, whereas 21.4% read at least one a month.

However, most women (65.5%) say that they watch television for over two hours a day (22.3% over four hours a day), whereas only 9.6% never watch it or do so sporadically. The most commonly viewed programmes by order of popularity are news programmes, films, series and serials, talk/variety shows, etc., and game shows. Only 5.7% say that their favourites are documentaries and cultural programmes and a mere 0.7% watch sports programmes.

### Female labour force participation in rural locations

Of the surveyed women, 38.5% work exclusively at home as housewives, whereas 38.8% are members of the labour force (24.0% are wage-earners and 14.8% are self-employed or business women). Of the wage-earners, only 13.3% are employed in agriculture.

Old age pensioners and students account for 5.6% and 5.9%, respectively.

The remaining 9.5% say that they are unemployed, but only 76.7% of these are job seekers. The remainder claim that they are not job seeking owing to marital and/or family circumstances (caring for children, older relations, etc.) and because it is not easy to find employment. The job-seeking procedures are mainly through offers mediated by the INEM (National Employment Institute) employment agencies, contacts through

**Table 2.** Distribution of women by age group

Years	Frequency (%)	
	Sample	Total for surveyed region (INE, 2002)
<25	17.4	17.42
25-34	19.4	19.21
35-44	18.8	18.49
45-54	12.5	12.16
55-65	11.8	11.41
>65	20.1	21.31

Source: Own survey (2004) and INE (2002).

family and/or friends (17.4%) and through the council (13.0%). Almost 55% of women are of the mind that, because they are women, they would find it harder to seek employment than men.

Of the women who are in employment, almost 10% declare that they have felt rejected or discriminated against on gender grounds during job seeking, all cases of which were in the private sector. Most women who work outside the home are satisfied with the job they now do. On a rating scale from 0 (not at all satisfied) to 9 (very satisfied), the average was 7.17, maximum scores (8 and 9) having been given in 55% of the cases. This can be interpreted as women having clearly opted to participate in and stay on the labour market despite the obstacles and difficulties.

Of the women who class themselves as housewives, 57.3% do not have other job, and the others either help with agricultural duties on family property (26.4%) or cooperate in a non-agricultural family business (16.2%). Of the reasons given for being a housewife, 44.2% value economic independence but have chosen this position as being the one that befits them for gender reasons, whereas one in every four consider that housework is a way of self-realisation.

Of the housewives, 62.4% think that this job option is good (47.9%) or very good (14.5%), whereas for over a quarter it is reasonable (26.5%), bad (6%) or very bad (5.1%).

There is a significant relationship between age, educational attainment and the rating of the choice of being a housewife in the sense that women aged over 55 yr with low educational attainment rate this position positively (very good or good). Younger women (<35 yr) with higher educational attainment (higher education) think, on the other hand, that this job option as bad or very bad.

The chief limitations on economic activity perceived by rural women can be summarised as: insufficient jobs for women (80.2%); insufficient leisure time because of responsibility for household duties and agricultural work (68.2%); distance and transport difficulties (63.81%); inadequate support services and facilities [shortage of nursery schools (67.9%) and day-care centres for the elderly (53.6%); shortage of information and counselling services (36.2%)] and health services (33.7%), generally low qualifications of women (56.2%) and traditional and cultural attitudes (55.2%).

Women not now in employment and not retired (housewives, the unemployed and students) say that if they were to work in the future, they would like to do the following: work in the services sector, commerce,

hotel business, etc. (39.7%); be just a housewife and take care of household duties (25.1% of all respondents); work in an office (14.6%); work in arable and livestock farming (3.8%); work in industry (1.0%); Others: study, etc. (15.8%).

Thus, rural women reject arable and livestock farming as a future employment choice. This rejection is largely the result of the traditional underestimation and «invisibility» of the role played by women in rural locations and agricultural activity, of which the concepts of «family hand» or «spouse», under which their contribution to economic activity is specified in the statistics, are a reflection.

However, almost 40% of the respondents would like to work in activities related to the services sector in the future. Women perceive this sector as an interesting future job choice, as there is an upsurge of tourist accommodation and related services in many rural communities of the region, this being an instrument of development and income generation. A quarter of women would prefer to be just housewives and take care of household duties in the future.

There is a significant relationship ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) between women's educational attainment, age and labour force participation in the rural milieu. Wage-earners principally have the highest educational attainment. Business women and the self-employed are often women who have taken first- or second-grade vocational training or upper or lower secondary education. The unemployed and housewives are generally unschooled women or women who have completed primary education.

By ages, the most economically active are women aged from 25 to 34 yr. Retired women and students are at either end of the age scale, that is, young women aged under 26 yr who are in education and women aged over 65 yr, most of whom have come to the end of their working life. The unemployed and housewives are most often aged from 35 to 44 and over 55 yr, respectively.

### Women's associations

Of the respondents, 15% belong to some women's association. This, albeit small percentage is much higher than women's membership of cultural (1.6%), youth (1.6%), professional (1.6%) and neighbourhood (1.3%) associations, and trade unions (0.3%) and local political parties (0.3%). Generally, rural women's participation in professional and production associations is low, and there is little political and trade union activity, which

matches the data collected by the European Commission (EC, 1998, 2000).

Over a third consider that women are not well enough represented in local institutions.

The participation of women in organisations started up very timidly from 1990, and did not reach a membership rate of 10% until 1995. Membership of women's organisations reached its height from 2000 to 2004 (56.4%). This undeniable growth of the rural female association movement recently reflects women's aspiration to leave behind the strictly domestic environment, indisputably having been able to somewhat strengthen the presence of women in a variety of local groups and improve the dynamism of rural society.

Of the respondents, 25.2% have had some contact with the Institute of Women's Affairs (IWA), with whose existence in their communities 60.6% of respondents are familiar. There is a clear relationship ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) between educational attainment, labour force participation and contacts with the IWA. The women who have least contact with the IWA in rural locations are working women with secondary or higher education.

No relationship between age and having contacted the IWA has, however, been detected ( $p > 0.05$ ).

### Perception of gender asymmetry

Table 3 shows the response frequencies for perception of equality in different areas.

The relationship between the perception of the level of gender inequality and prioritisation of needs was examined, and was found to be significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) at different levels by areas. So, for example, in the case of employment, women who perceive equality are much less likely to prioritise strategic needs than women

**Table 3.** Perception of the level of gender inequality in different areas (%)

Area	A lot of inequality	Quite a lot of inequality	Not a lot of inequality	Equality
Employment	23.6	26.6	30.0	19.9
Household	34.1	30.4	22.1	13.4
Education	5.7	13.5	22.2	58.6
Politics	12.1	21.4	35.0	31.5
Law	12.1	28.4	31.1	28.4
Society	16.6	22.1	35.3	26.0

Source: Own survey (2004).

who perceive any level of inequality, there being no difference between levels.

The biggest inequality is perceived in the areas of household, employment and society and the greatest equality is perceived in education (Table 3).

The perception of a lot of inequality within the household signifies that the relationships there are within the household are still inflexible and based on traditional stereotypes, anchored in the separation of roles, duties and even spaces, which place women in a position discrimination with respect to men. If the role played by women in rural development so far is to be modified, these traditional attitudes that delimit women's action, reducing their participation and, therefore, social influence, need to be left behind.

As far as the household is concerned, Table 4 shows the proportion of duties and decision making performed by gender, clearly illustrating the big gender-related difference there is in the domestic arena across all generations. Specifically, household improvement and maintenance duties fall mostly to women. Driving the car, gardening and looking after animals, as well as repairing household breakages are duties primarily for the partner/father. Decision making on large sums of money or leading to drastic changes in the household (application for bank loans, buying or moving house, etc.), however, calls for the participation and/or agreement of both.

The division of household duties is marked by a pronounced gender component, also directly mirrored by a vast difference in the number of hours that women as compared to men spend on household duties. In actual fact, the female member of a couple spends on average 6.21 h on housework compared to under 1 h (0.78 h) for the male member, where the respective modes are 8 and 0. Half of the women (49.5%) spend from 6 to 10 h per day on household duties. Almost 40% of the respondents say that their daughters help with everyday household duties more than their sons do.

### Opinions and attitudes on rural development and perception of recent changes in the community

A high percentage of women are of the opinion that there have been generally many (14%) or some (42.1%) changes in their communities as regards the overall increase in the standard of living and welfare latterly. These changes have been rated as is shown in Table 5.



**Table 4.** Performance of household duties and decision-making by gender (%)<sup>1</sup>

	Women	Partners	Indistinctly	Mother	Father	Daughter	Son	Daughter/ son indistinctly	All indistinctly	Employed person
Caring for and looking after children	72.4	0.4	8.9	17.8	0.4	—	—	—	—	—
Helping children with homework	65.4	4.9	12.3	12.3	3.1	0.6	—	0.6	—	0.6
Taking children to nursery school or school	72.5	1.6	5.5	17.6	2.7	—	—	—	—	—
Preparing meals	71.1	1.7	5.3	18.3	1.3	1.3	—	—	0.3	0.7
Repairing household breakages	27.6	39.8	12.3	5.6	8.3	0.3	4.3	1.7	1.3	7.6
Buying clothes	72.7	0.3	9.7	7.7	0.3	4.7	4.7	0.3	4.4	—
Shopping	62.8	1.3	13.6	15.6	1.7	2.3	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
Washing dishes	68.8	2.0	8.6	11.3	0.3	6.0	—	1.7	0.7	0.7
Washing clothes	76.5	0.3	2.6	18.5	0.3	1.0	—	—	0.3	0.3
Cleaning the house	69.9	0.3	6.6	13.9	0.7	6.0	—	0.7	—	2.0
Mending and sewing clothes	75.1	—	0.7	20.8	0.7	1.7	—	0.3	—	0.7
Setting the table	52.3	2.7	16.0	8.0	0.3	10.0	0.3	4.3	5.3	0.7
Watering plants	66.4	5.6	5.2	17.9	1.9	1.1	0.4	0.7	0.7	—
Driving the car	8.2	44.5	22.3	2.7	14.1	0.4	2.3	5.1	0.4	—
Seeing to administrative formalities	36.7	17.2	21.5	4.7	6.7	4.4	1.3	2.0	1.3	4.0
Caring for the elderly	72.6	1.5	9.6	11.1	0.7	2.2	0.7	—	—	1.5
Gardening and looking after animals	15.7	42.9	13.6	2.1	17.9	2.1	3.6	1.4	0.7	—
Important household decision making	24.6	3.8	59.4	6.5	4.1	0.7	0.7	—	0.3	—
Buying or moving house	15.0	4.5	68.9	3.8	6.3	0.3	0.7	—	0.3	—
Applying for bank loans	13.9	22.9	48.9	4.1	9.0	0.4	0.8	—	—	—

<sup>1</sup> Percentage of all the responses given by women in whose households each activity has to be performed. *Source:* Own survey (2004).

Only a fifth of the respondents consider the economic changes to be fairly or very positive compared with 4.6% who think that they have been fairly or very negative. Social and cultural changes have also been very or fairly positive for some 17% of respondents and only

3% and 1% believe that they have been fairly or very negative, respectively.

A third of the women say that there have been no environmental changes latterly and, according to almost 60%, the same applies to the quality of life generally

**Table 5.** Rural women's level of perception of the rural development-induced changes in their communities in recent years (frequency)

Areas	Very positive	Fairly positive	Slightly positive	There were no changes	Slightly negative	Fairly negative	Very negative
Economy	2.3	16.7	33.8	27.4	15.1	4.3	0.3
Society	2.3	14.3	34.9	34.6	11.0	2.3	0.7
Culture	0.7	16.8	43.1	35.4	3.0	1.0	0.0
Environment	0.7	8.4	29.3	33.0	21.2	6.4	1.0
Services	2.0	13.0	42.0	30.3	10.0	2.0	0.7
Quality of life	0.0	0.7	6.7	57.5	28.8	6.0	0.3
Participation of women in development	11.0	20.9	35.5	24.9	7.6	0.0	0.0

*Source:* Own survey (2004).

in their communities, whereas some 6% are of the opinion that these changes have been very or fairly negative. This last claim is due, according to the respondents, to the loss of peace and quiet in the rural milieu, the growth of the noise level, a rise in delinquency, changes in the landscape, etc., compared with earlier decades.

On the other hand, over 67.4% of the respondents think that the participation of women in the economic development of their communities is positive.

A third of the women know of the existence of a local action group (LAG) in their community (Leader, Proder or Consortiums: unions), and a fifth are familiar with its activities in which one in ten say that they have participated.

The respondents consider that the rural development programmes put into practice in their respective communities are assuring fairly (15.4%) or totally (29.9%) that women achieve participation on equal terms with men. In this respect García-Bartolomé (2001), referring to the creation of jobs generated by European rural development policies, says that women are benefiting from them, although to a much lesser extent than men. Accordingly, of the 13,522 permanent jobs created under Leader II<sup>2</sup>, for example, 26.6% were for women. García-Bartolomé (1999) also says that of the 132 LAGs in Spain, 46 are chaired or managed by women.

Accordingly, the community initiatives passed at the Berlin European Council in 1999 for the 2000-2006 period, INTERREG, EQUAL (aimed at encouraging equality regarding all aspects of discrimination at work, including gender, between men and women) and Leader+, will doubtlessly continue to open up new opportunities for women concerned about rural development.

The respondents consider that the revaluation and sale of typical agrofood products is the activity with the greatest potential in which women can actively participate in rural development projects (44%), followed by rural tourism (40%). Only 3% opt for agriculture, which again confirms their rejection of this activity as mentioned earlier.

### Rural women's prioritisation of components of the social welfare function

To find out how rural women prioritise the elements of which their social utility or welfare function is composed, they were asked to allocate 100 units of financial resources proportionally to different projects in their community to satisfy this function. The responses were extracted as shown in Table 6.

Social projects are the ones that arouse most interest and are given higher priority for achieving higher levels of well-being for rural women and easing their participation in economic life and the general development of their communities.

Women who are against investing or would invest very little in environmental projects account for 41%, whereas this percentage is 30.7% and 13% for cultural and economic projects, respectively.

### Prioritisation of gender needs

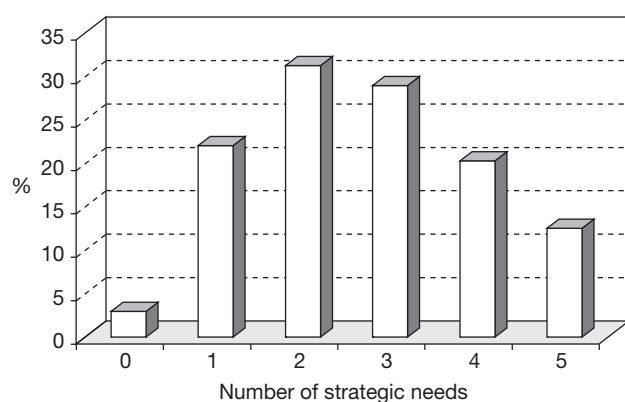
In 52% of responses, the first option chosen by women was a strategic need; the others, however, have opted for a practical need as having the highest priority

**Table 6.** Mean and extreme values of percentage prioritisation of social welfare function components (%)

Projects	Mean	Coefficient of variance	≤10% of investment: zero or low priority	≥50% of investment: strong priority
Economic	27.60	49.06	12.9	12.0
Social	34.21	41.71	4.3	24.3
Cultural	20.38	55.20	30.7	2.9
Environmental	17.48	66.01	41.0	2.1

Source: Own survey (2004).

<sup>2</sup> The Community Initiative LEADER II (Liaisons Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale i.e. Links Between Actions for the Development of the Rural Economy) has been approved by a decision of the Commission of the European Communities in the 15th of June 1994. The LEADER II initiative was the follow up of the very successful LEADER I initiative (1991-1994). In the context of the initiative, which lasted from 1994 to 2001, and is followed in the current programming period by LEADER+, community funds were granted in the form of integrated operational programs for the local agricultural development agents to implement experimental innovative approaches at local scale.



**Figure 1.** Sample distribution of the number of strategic needs in the prioritisation process. *Source:* Own survey (2004).

for improving their position in rural society. This is indicative of there being some awareness among rural women about seeking a bigger role in society and achieving equal opportunities between men and women.

Taking into account the five needs prioritised by women to improve the level of well-being in their respective communities, Figure 1 includes the frequency distribution of the number of strategic needs in the sample.

The priority needs, identified by rural women (five priority elements per response) turned out to be the ones shown in Table 7.

### Modelling the perception of gender needs

Table 8 includes the results of the final estimation of the Probit model specified in the methodology section after removing the variables that turned out not to be significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

No significant relationship ( $p > 0.05$ ) was detected between the prioritisation of gender needs and family unit (FAMU); age (AGE); (TV) time spent watching the television; percentage prioritisation of investments in economic (PROJECO); cultural (PROJCULT) and environmental (PROJENV) projects; parenthood (CHILD), purchase of newspapers within the household (PNEW) and monthly disposable per capita income (INCOME).

This is a highly significant adjustment, with a high percentage of correct classification (PCC) of the order of 75%.

As regards the discrete variables with more than two levels, changes to their reference levels were done to

**Table 7.** Highest priority gender needs in rural locations

Needs	% of total responses
Share out the responsibilities for children's education better and distribute tasks and duties within the family unit between men and women: equal division of household duties, farm work, etc., and profits	60.40
Train women to raise their general qualifications (training in new technologies, language courses, recycling, etc.)	55.30
Have access to a care service for the elderly in the village (day care)	52.20
Remodel social insurance coverage in recognition of women as rural helpers in unpaid family activities	51.60
Have access to nursery schools and alternative services	46.20
Raise the awareness and sensitivity of men and all the actors in rural society concerning the reconciliation of working and family life	44.10
Have access to a health centre with specialised care for children and the elderly	21.40
Have equal pay: equal wage for equivalent work	18.90
Have access to more shops with a wider assortment of possible products	18.00
Have access to a public library with information on gender-related issues and subjects of interest to women	7.70
Set up and provide access to information services for women (TV, radio stations for rural women, web pages, etc.)	7.00
Other needs (public transport, chemists', INEM office in the village, etc.)	7.6

*Source:* Own survey (2004).

**Table 8.** Final adjustment of the probability model for prioritising gender needs in rural locations

Variables	Coefficients	T statistic	p-value
Constant	2.180491624	5.148	0.0000
OCUP-1 <sup>1</sup>	0.535967674	2.192	0.0284
OCUP-2	0.561264840	2.312	0.0208
OCUP-3	-0.396431916	-1.528	0.1264
OCUP-5	0.212219075	0.711	0.4774
EDUC-1 <sup>2</sup>	-1.187179538	-3.356	0.0008
EDUC-2	-1.127161596	-3.743	0.0002
EDUC-3	-0.7548635150	-2.856	0.0043
PMAG-1 <sup>3</sup>	0.5333640623	2.227	0.0260
PMAG-2	0.1281196016	0.674	0.5006
READN-1 <sup>4</sup>	0.9068149588	3.999	0.0001
READN-2	0.5412192816	2.325	0.0201
READB-2 <sup>5</sup>	-0.3978523985	1.185	0.2359
READB-3	-1.130072204	-3.164	0.0003
READB-4	-0.8270121164	-2.064	0.0390
READB-5	-1.250424136	-3.483	0.0005
READB-6	-1.266077586	-3.578	0.0003
MWOMA	0.4909039549	2.264	0.0236
CONTIM	-0.5624644036	-2.222	0.0263
INEQW-1 <sup>6</sup>	0.5080205044	2.109	0.0335
INEQW-2	0.4092481147	-3.237	0.0051
INEQW-3	-0.9136507316	1.801	0.5179
INEQF-1 <sup>7</sup>	0.2877400236	2.126	0.0335
INEQF-2	-0.1148397413	-0.647	0.0718
INEQF-3	-0.1808677039	-1.278	0.2013
PROJSOC	-0.190120E-01	-1.738	0.0282
CANGE-1 <sup>8</sup>	2.6475208190	2.840	0.0451
CHANGE-2	-0.2957006147	-1.576	0.1151

<sup>1</sup> Reference variable OCUP-4 (labour force participation: housewife). <sup>2</sup> Reference variable EDUC-4 (higher education). <sup>3</sup> Reference variable PMAG-3 (never buys magazines). <sup>4</sup> Reference variable REAN-3 (never reads newspapers). <sup>5</sup> Reference variable READB-1 (reads books every day). <sup>6</sup> Reference variable INEQW-1 (no perceives gender inequalities at work). <sup>7</sup> Reference variable INEQF-4 (no perceives gender inequalities at home). <sup>8</sup> Reference variable CHANGE-3 (perceives no changes in the village in recent years). Unconstrained probability logarithm (Log V): -146.7441. Constrained probability logarithm (Log V<sub>0</sub>): -281.2721. Chi-squared: 269.0760. Degrees of freedom: 27. Significance level of the adjustment  $p \leq 0.001$ . Percentage of correct classification (PCC)= 75.42%.

obtain all the respective significant inferences. The relationships below follow from the analysis of the results of the adjusted models.

With respect to the prioritisation of strategic or practical needs, the women fall into two groups by labour force participation. Working women (wage-earners, self-employed and business women) are significantly more likely ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) to prioritise strategic needs than the other groups (unemployed, housewives, old age pensioners, etc.). It can be deduced therefore that women's economic activity of any kind is associated with a greater prioritisation of strategic gender needs, which is fairly consistent theoretically speaking.

The group that most pronouncedly prioritises practical gender needs are housewives, which is not surprising,

as their non-participation in the labour force means that they have fewer strategic gender interests and possibly a bigger perception of practical needs.

There is a clear relationship between women's prioritisation of gender needs and educational attainment ( $p \leq 0.001$ ) in the sense that women who have completed upper secondary or higher education are more likely to prioritise strategic needs than women who have had no schooling or have been educated to primary level, there being no significant difference between the last two groups. Educational attainment then is directly related to the prioritisation of strategic gender needs or, equivalently, with the questioning of gender roles.

Although the purchase of newspapers by the household has no significant relationship ( $p > 0.05$ ) to the

prioritisation of gender needs, the individual reading of newspapers does in the sense that women who say that they read the newspaper daily or from time to time more often demand strategic needs than women who say that they do not read newspapers.

Likewise, there is a significant direct relationship between the purchase of magazines and the probability of prioritising strategic needs, the difference between all three levels of the variable being significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).

The prioritisation of gender needs is also related to the frequency of book reading ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) in the sense that rural women who say that they regularly read books more often prioritise strategic needs.

Therefore, reading newspapers, magazines and books positively influences the process of prioritisation of strategic gender needs among the surveyed rural women. This group of women is likely to be the most well informed, and they aim to achieve gender symmetry in their respective communities.

There is a significant and direct relationship ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) between membership of a women's association and the likelihood of prioritising strategic gender needs.

The relationship between contact with the Institute of Women's Affairs (IWA) and prioritisation of strategic needs is significant but inverse. This means that women who have or have had contact with the IWA are more likely to prioritise practical gender needs.

Women who are more interested in investing in social projects are more likely to prioritise practical gender needs.

The perceptiveness of inequality within the household and at work influences the prioritisation of gender needs in the sense that women who perceive a lot or quite a lot of inequalities in these areas demand more strategic needs as a means for achieving gender symmetry within their respective households and at their place of work.

Likewise, women who say that there have been a lot of changes latterly leading to an increase in the standard of living and social welfare in their respective communities tend to more often prioritise strategic gender needs. Women who see no or very few changes basically prioritise practical gender needs. Thus the bigger the changes in the level of social development of the community that women perceive, the more strategic the gender needs they prioritise will be, which is fairly consistent theoretically speaking.

Table 9 illustrates the significance of the different variables that we have looked at.

Apart from identifying the factors that influence the perception and priorities of rural women with respect

**Table 9.** Diagram of the relationship between SGNs and variables specified in the model

Variables	Relation with SGNs
— Labour force participation	S $\blacktriangle$
— Educational attainment	S $\blacktriangle$
— Purchase frequency of magazines	S $\blacktriangle$
— Reading frequency of books	S $\blacktriangle$
— Reading frequency of newspapers	S $\blacktriangle$
— Perception of the community's increased standard of living and social welfare	S $\blacktriangle$
— Membership of women's organisations	S $\blacktriangle$
— Perception of inequality at work	S $\blacktriangle$
— Perception of inequality at home	S $\blacktriangle$
— Contact with the Institute of Women's Affairs	S $\blacktriangledown$
— Priority interest in investing in social projects	S $\blacktriangledown$
— Age	NS
— Parent-hood	NS
— Family unit	NS
— Presence of newspapers in the home	NS
— Time spent watching television	NS
— Per capita disposable income	NS
— Percentage prioritisation of investments in economic projects	NS
— Percentage prioritisation of investments in cultural projects	NS
— Percentage prioritisation of investments in environmental projects	NS

NS: not significant ( $p \geq 0.05$ ). S  $\blacktriangle$  direct relationship ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). S  $\blacktriangledown$  indirect relationship ( $p \leq 0.05$ )

to practical and/or strategic gender needs in their communities, the estimated Probit model can be used to calculate the probability of a given woman prioritising any level of strategic needs.

So, for example, a self-employed woman in a rural community in which she perceives that there has been a considerable increase in the standard of living and social welfare over the last 10 yr, who has high educational attainment, often buys magazines and reads books and newspapers every day, belongs to women's organisations and has had no contact with the Institute of Women's Affairs, that perceives inequalities at home and at work and is not interested in investing in social projects, would have the following probabilities of prioritising strategic needs:

- $P(SGN_i = 0) = 0.001$
- $P(SGN_i = 1) = 0.298$
- $P(SGN_i = 2) = 0.701$

The probability of her prioritising of SGNs is very high.

Whereas a woman who is a housewife, lives in a rural community in which she perceives hardly any changes as regards the increase in the standard of living and social welfare over the last 10 yr, has had no schooling, never buys magazines and does not read books or newspapers, is not a member of a women's association but has or has had contacts with the Institute of Women's Affairs, does not perceive a lot of gender inequality at home and has a priority interest in social projects, would have the following probabilities of prioritising strategic needs:

- $P(SGN_i = 0) = 0.826$
- $P(SGN_i = 1) = 0.168$
- $P(SGN_i = 2) = 0.006$

The probability of her prioritising of PGNs is very high.

## Conclusions

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the above results:

- Women in the rural milieu today actively participate in the economy of their respective communities in both paid employment and other, no less important, jobs (helping in farm work and/or family businesses, etc.). Unemployed women generally take an active stand about finding work. Causes related to the labour market (insufficient jobs) are what are most often put forward to explain female unemployment, followed by the generally low qualifications of women and responsibilities for household duties and/or within the family business.

- Rural women not now in employment reject arable and livestock farming as a future employment option. On the other hand, the new functions of the rural space, particularly, occupations related to the services sector, awaken much more interest.

- The greatest gender inequality is perceived at home, at work and in society, whereas the biggest equality is perceived in education. Specifically, it has been found that a large part of the family burdens within households still fall almost exclusively to women. This confirms the persistence of differential positions with regard to the equality of opportunities for the participation of women in the public domain and more specifically the labour force.

- Rural women do not tend to participate much in professional, cultural and civic associations in the rural milieu. Nevertheless, there has been somewhat of a

trend towards female membership of associations in recent years.

- Women consider that the rural development programmes put into practice in their respective communities are somehow helping to achieve gender symmetry in rural locations. Additionally, they also perceive, as a result of these programmes, some increase in the standard of living and general welfare in their respective communities.

- The prioritisation of strategic over practical gender needs or vice versa is a criterion for analysing gender asymmetry in society.

- In the analysed communities of south-eastern Spain, there is a real and perceived situation of gender asymmetry, although there is a strong drive towards its correction.

- Linked to the above, the prioritisation of strategic gender needs has turned out to be important, as almost six out of every 10 women have given top priority to strategic gender needs, which is indicative of a fairly evolved stage in the dynamics of the perception of the need to correct gender asymmetry.

- The prioritisation of strategic gender needs is related to female labour force participation in the sense that a working woman is more likely to prioritise strategic gender needs than women in other positions (housewives, the unemployed, old age pensioners, etc.).

- The greater the level of social development of a rural community, the more strategic the needs will be.

- The prioritisation of strategic gender needs is directly related to a series of cultural variables: educational attainment, how often they read newspapers, books and magazines.

- Another factor directly related to the prioritisation of strategic gender needs is membership of a women's association.

- Contacts with the IWA are related to the prioritisation of gender needs such that women who have contacts with this institution prioritise practical gender needs. There are several possible reasons for this, which remain to be confirmed. On the one hand, the IWA might implement a Women In Development (WID)-type policy or, in relation to this, the women in question might be linked to practical projects or actions, or, on the other, women linked to the IWA might, personally, be in a gender position where they do not consider strategic gender needs to be necessary any longer.

- A greater interest in investing in social projects also points to a greater probability of prioritising practical gender needs.

— A greater perception of gender inequalities in the different areas (at home, at work, etc.) logically leads to a greater probability of prioritising strategic gender needs.

Taking into account the above conclusions, any plan of action to meet strategic gender needs involves:

— Increasing the level of education and training of women in rural regions: training in new technologies, languages, business planning and management, etc.

— Raising the awareness of gender inequalities in different areas (at home, at work, in institutions, etc.).

## Acknowledgements

The authors gratefully acknowledge the funds received from the Consejería de Agricultura y Pesca of the Andalusian Government and from the Spanish National Institute for Agricultural Research and Technology (INIA), through PIR and RTA2006-00055 projects, respectively.

The authors would like to thank anonymous reviewers and the journal's editor for their constructive comments which have substantially improved the final version of this paper, and also the interest shown by rural women in answering the questionnaire.

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