

## GENDER DIVISION OF LABOR IN FARMING SYSTEM: A CASE STUDY IN OMON DISTRICT, CAN THO PROVINCE, MEKONG DELTA.

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### ABSTRACT

*There was equal gender division of labor in crop and animal production in the complete families. In profiles of activities, women mostly involved their traditional tasks as gap-filling, hand weeding, harvesting, thinning in rice and upland crop production, meanwhile men did most of heavy tasks. Most of activities in fruit and fish production were men's concerns. In pig and poultry production, women paid more attention in caring tasks as feeding, cleaning, collecting fodder, buying food, and selling. The gender division of labor in profile of activities imply that the innovation of technologies as well as technology transfers should be focussed on men and women specific tasks*

### INTRODUCTION

Women make up nearly half the farm population. The sexual division of labor is related to the adult life of women on farms. Women's participation is almost totally as non-paid labor (72 or 95 percent of female laborers were non-paid). Thorsen (1986) reported that different combinations of economic adaptation have influenced the sexual division of labor as well as the organization of the peasant household and the distribution of authority between male farmer and wife. Ethnologist distinguishes areas with female peasants from areas with male peasants. As a rule women did not plough or sow in regions where male farming predominated. However, they did harvesting cereals. According to Reimer (1986) there is sexual division of labor in activities directly related to commercial production. Men are clearly more active in the activities most directly related to commercial production. Women are most often solely responsible for the maintenance of farm accounts and care of chickens, both activities consistent with the traditional role of women.

This paper focusses on the role of women and men within the family labor farm.

### METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS.

The information on household characteristics and division of labor in rice based-farming system was collected from 90 households randomly selected from Thoi Long, Thoi Lai and Thoi Thanh villages (O Mon district, Can Tho province). These households are all complete families with presence of husband, wife and children. A method of direct interview was employed by using structured questionnaire.

Descriptive statistics was applied to summary data in the forms of mean and percentage.

### RESULTS

#### 1. Farming system.

Triple rice alone and combination of triple rice with orchard, fish pond and animal shelter was the most popular systems in farmer community. Farmers seem pay more attention in combination of different activities on their farm. Pig shelter and fish pond were dominant aside from rice farming (Table 1).

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**Table 1:** Farming system

Farm system	(%)
Triple rice	22
Triple rice + orchard + fish pond + animal shelter	23
Triple rice + orchard + fish pond	11
Triple rice + animal shelter	7
Triple rice + orchard	7
Triple rice + upland crop + orchard + fish + animal shelter	1
Double rice	6
Double rice + orchard + fish pond	7
Double rice + upland crop + orchard + fish pond	3
Double rice + fish pond + animal shelter	3
Double rice + fish in rice field	1
Double rice + orchard	1
Double rice + animal shelter	1
Orchard + fish pond + animal shelter	5
Total	100

## 2. Gender division of labor

In general, there was equal share of work between family male and female labor in production of rice, upland-crop, fruits, fish, pig, chicken and duck as well as handicraft activities. Family male labors involved in

riding, working as hired labors and government services more than family female labor (Table 2). Male hired labors participated more than female hired labors in rice, fruit and fish production.

**Table 2:** Gender participation in farm production and household activities (%)

Activities	Male family labor		Female family labor		Male hired labor		Female hired labor	
	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode
Rice production	62	50	38	50	57	33	43	40
Upland crop production	57	50	43	50	-	-	-	-
Fruit production	63	50	37	50	65	50	35	20
Fish production	68	50	34	50	65	50	35	20
Pig production	32	50	68	50	-	-	-	-
Chicken production	37	50	63	50	-	-	-	-
Duck production	51	50	49	50	-	-	-	-
Handicraft	55	50	45	50	100	100	0	0
Small trading	50	0	50	0	-	-	-	-
Riding passenger boats	80	50	20	0	-	-	-	-
Working as hired labors	74	100	26	0	-	-	-	-
Government employee	100	100	0	0	-	-	-	-

In rice production activities, both family and hired female labors participated more than males in the traditional tasks for women as gap-filling (replanting), hand weeding and harvesting.

Family and hired male labors participated more in heavy tasks as land preparation, seed broadcasting, irrigation, chemical and fertilizer applications, transportation and threshing (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Gender division of labor in rice production (%)

Activities	Male family labor		Female family labor		Male hired labor		Female hired labor	
	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode
Land preparation by machine	84	100	12	0	100	100	0	0
Land preparation by hand	80	100	21	0	98	100	3	0
Seed broadcasting	72	50	28	50	86	100	14	0
Gap filling (replanting)	48	50	52	50	12	0	88	100
Irrigation	91	100	12	0	100	100	0	0
Hand weeding	46	50	54	50	9	0	91	100
Chemical spraying	87	100	13	0	100	100	0	0
Fertilizer application	86	100	14	0	86	100	14	0
Harvesting	43	50	57	50	41	0	60	100
Transportation	89	100	12	0	94	100	6	0
Threshing	66	50	34	50	96	100	4	0
Winnowing	57	50	43	50	86	100	14	0
Drying	52	50	48	50	58	0	42	0
Selling	47	50	53	50	0	0	0	0

Similarly, more family male labors participated in heavy tasks in upland crop production. More family female labors involved more in sowing, plant thinning, hand weeding and harvesting (Table 4). On the

other hand, more family male labors participated in most of fruit production activities (Table 5). More family female labors involved more in selling fruit products.

**Table 4.** Gender division of labor in upland crop production (%)

Activities	Male family labor		Female family labor		Male hired labor		Female hired labor	
	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode
Land preparation by machine	100	100	0	0	100	100	0	0
Land preparation by hand	63	50	37	50	100	100	0	0
Sowing	46	50	54	50	0	0	100	100
Thinning	46	50	54	50	-	-	-	-
Irrigation	100	100	0	0	-	-	-	-
Hand weeding	44	50	56	50	-	-	-	-
Chemical spraying	86	100	14	0	-	-	-	-
Fertilizer application	86	100	14	0	-	-	-	-
Harvesting	44	50	56	50	0	0	100	100
Transportation	70	50	30	50	-	-	-	-
Threshing	75	50	25	0	-	-	-	-
Drying	50	50	50	50	-	-	-	-
Selling	50	50	50	50	-	-	-	-

**Table 5.** Gender division of labor in fruit production (%)

Activities	Male family labor		Female family labor		Male hired labor		Female hired labor	
	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode
Land preparation by machine	61	50	28	50	-	-	-	-
Land preparation by hand	67	50	33	50	100	100	0	0
Planting	67	50	33	50	100	100	0	0
Thinning	65	50	35	50	-	-	-	-
Irrigation	83	100	17	0	-	-	-	-
Hand weeding	52	50	50	50	0	0	100	100
Chemical spraying	84	100	16	0	-	-	-	-
Fertilizer application	80	100	20	0	50	50	50	50
Harvesting	59	50	41	50	68	35	33	0
Transportation	70	100	30	0	68	35	33	0
Selling	37	50	63	50	-	-	-	-

In pig and poultry production activities more family male labors than female labors involved in making shelter, vaccine injection and transportation. More family female labor than male labors participated in buying food and collecting fodder, feeding pig, cleaning shelter and cleaning pig, collecting poultry eggs and selling. There was gender share of

tasks in poultry feeding and watching duck released in field (Table 6 and 7).

Aquaculture seems to be male concern. Both family and hired male labors involved in most of fish production activities. Female family labors shared the tasks with male labors in feeding and selling (Table 8).

**Table 6.** Gender division of labor in pig production (%)

Activities	Male family labor		Female family labor		Male hired labor	
	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode
Shelter preparation	77	100	25	0	100	100
Buying food and collecting fodder	33	50	67	50	-	-
Feeding	38	50	63	50	-	-
Cleaning shelter and pig	47	50	53	50	-	-
Vaccine injection	73	100	22	0	100	100
Transportation	72	100	28	0	-	-
Selling	43	50	57	50	-	-

**Table 7.** Gender division of labor in duck & chicken production (%)

Activities	Duck production				Chicken production			
	Male family labor		Female family labor		Male family labor		Female family labor	
	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode
Shelter preparation	90	100	10	0	100	100	0	0
Buying food and collect fodder	31	0	69	100	29	0	71	100
Feeding	50	50	50	50	21	0	79	100
Cleaning shelter	34	0	67	33	0	0	100	100
Watching in the field	50	0	50	0	-	-	-	-
Collecting eggs	36	0	64	100	17	0	83	100
Vaccine injection	83	100	17	0	47	0	53	0
Transportation	88	100	13	0	50	50	50	50
Selling	29	50	71	50	10	0	90	100

Table 8: Gender division of labor in fish production (%)

Activity	Male family labor		Female family labor		Male hired labor		Female hired labor	
	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode	Mean	Mode
Fish pond preparation	98	100	2	0	100	100	0	0
Water treatment	98	100	2	0	100	100	0	0
Feeding	60	50	42	50	-	-	-	-
Chemical treatment	98	100	3	0	-	-	-	-
Harvesting	78	100	23	0	89	100	11	0
Transportation	78	100	22	0	100	100	0	0
Selling	53	50	47	50	100	100	0	0

### CONCLUSION

Farmers involved in different farming activities on double and triple rice based systems. In the complete family there was equal gender division of labor in crop and animal production in general. In activity profile, female labors involved more in the traditional tasks for women as gap-filling, hand weeding, harvesting, thinning in annual crop as rice and upland crops, meanwhile male labors did most of heavy tasks. In

perennial crop as fruit trees and aquaculture (fish raising), most of production activities were male concerned. In animal production (pig and poultry), female labors paid more attention in caring as feeding, cleaning, collecting fodder, buying food collecting products and selling. The gender division of labors in profiles of activities imply that the innovation of technologies as well as technology transfers should be focussed male and female specific tasks.

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### SUMMARY IN VIETNAMESE

#### Sự phân công lao động nam, nữ trong hệ thống nông nghiệp tại Ô Môn, Cần Thơ

Nhìn chung, trong một gia đình đầy đủ vợ chồng và con cái thì có sự phân công lao động về giới bằng nhau giữa nam và nữ trong trồng trọt và chăn nuôi tại nông thôn huyện Ô Môn, Cần Thơ. Trong từng khâu sản xuất, nữ thường đóng góp lao động vào việc cấy dặm, tía, làm cỏ bằng tay, thu hoạch trong canh tác lúa và cây hoa màu. Hầu hết các công việc trong sản xuất loại cây ăn trái lâu năm và nuôi tôm cá là mối quan tâm của nam. Trái lại, nữ chú ý nhiều hơn vào các công việc chăm sóc gia súc, gia cầm như cho ăn, vệ sinh chuồng trại, tắm rửa gia súc, cắt cỏ và rau làm thức ăn trong chăn nuôi, mua thức ăn gia súc và bán sản phẩm.. Sự phân công lao động về giới ám chỉ rằng sự đổi mới kỹ thuật và chuyển giao kỹ thuật cần chú ý đến việc đặc thù của nam và nữ.

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