

A Gender Lens: Gender Sensitive Value Chain Selection in Wild Flower Industry

B.M.R.L.Basnayake, W.M.T.B.Weddagala, H.M.L.Wijesekara, D.A.M.De Silva
Department of Agribusiness Management, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences,
Sabaragamuwa University, P.O.Box 02, Belihuloya ruwinibasnayake@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study was mainly focused on gender contribution throughout the wild flower value chain in Sri Lanka & taken up with three major objectives of; map the wild flower value chain and identify the value chain actors, supporters, and influencers, actor analysis and gender sensitive value chain selection. The study methodology included rapid market chain analysis to collect primary data and the actor analysis and gender sensitive value chain selection was done by using the Gender in Value Chains Practical Toolkit (AgriProFocus 2012). The study mainly based on 3 key wild flower value chains; Lotus, Lily and Jasmine. Value chain map shows that core process, main actors, flow of products, knowledge and flow of information, volume of products, geographical flow, volume at different levels, relationships and linkages, constraints. Actor analysis identified the value chain actors and their functions. And by the Gender sensitive value chain selection indicates that while having higher growth potential in Jasmine value chain; women empowerment is higher in Lotus value chain.

Keywords: Wild flower, Gender, Value chain, Sri Lanka

Introduction and Research Problem/Issue

Production and selling of local fresh flowers has become a key business at many religious places in Sri Lanka for many years. Mostly the women are engaged in this activity as a self-employed venture (Niranjan and Gunasena, 2006). There are 103 natural river basins in Sri Lanka, with a total length of about 4,500km (UNESCO and MoAIMD 2006). Availability of this natural resources as well as customs and traditions of communities there is a scattered niche market available for wild flowers. And this industry is very much important because globalization does not only patch up market gaps and brings producers and consumers closer

together; it also brings regional and international competition into local markets. Few studies were done to identify the position and strategic opportunities for recently emerged hubs in the cut flowers value chain like Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Nepal (Gebreyesus & Iizuka, 2010; Gebreyesus & Senoble, 2009; Maangi, 2008; Yanai et al., 2007). Wild flowers created employment and income generation for rural men and women as collectors and growers. Flower marketing strengthens the household economies of the urban retailers and product caters the demands of religious and cultural events. In such a case a large number of people competing in local, regional or global markets can benefit from these advantages. The study was taken up with three major objectives of; map the wild flower value chain and identify the value chain actors, supporters, and influencers, actor analysis; what roles they are playing? and Gender sensitive value chain selection. Further, limited number of studies paid attention on wild flower value chain and our focus was keen on gender sensitive value chain selection in wild flower industry in Sri Lanka.

Research Methodology

Rapid market chain analysis was conducted to collect the primary data. Structured pretested questionnaire, in-depth interviews and field observations were main data collection tools. The respondents were various actors already engaging in the wild flower value chain including collectors/ growers, distributors and retailers in Colombo, Kaluthara, Kandy, Katharagama, Anuradhapura, Badulla, Chillaw, Vavniya. The actor analysis and gender sensitive value chain selection was done by using the Gender in Value Chains Practical Toolkit (Agri-ProFocus 2012). This toolkit intends to motivate and help practitioners in integrating a gender perspective in agricultural value chain development, by providing practical tools for all stages of the value chain intervention. And the actor analysis was done based on socio economic factors, women involvement for different roles in value chain, access and control over resources by women, impact on men, women and children. The gender sensitive value chain selection was used to compare selected wild flower value chains. Long established as well as socially and economically important value chains, lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*), water lily (*Nymphaea pubescens*) and jasmine (*Jasminum officinale*). Value chain mapping focused to map core process, main actors, flow of products, knowledge and flow of information, volume of products, geographical flow, volume at different levels, relationships and linkages, constraints and solutions.

Results and Findings

Study focused on 3 key wild flower value chains; lotus, water lily and jasmine. Actor analysis identified the value chain actors and their functions. Upstream of the selected value chains composed of collectors and growers (jasmine) of flowers. Wild collection of lotus and water lily has its own mechanism of sharing natural resources among competing collectors. User rights were equally distributed among the collectors of resource base, i.e. reservoir or tank and access rights were restricted to community members. Free rider issues were managed through the informal negotiations among the regular collectors. Jasmine upstream represents the growers or farmers and they own the resource. In general, majority of the collectors and growers were male. Figure 1 explain the core process, actors, approximate volume of flowers handled, constrains and geographical flow of the 3 different value chains.

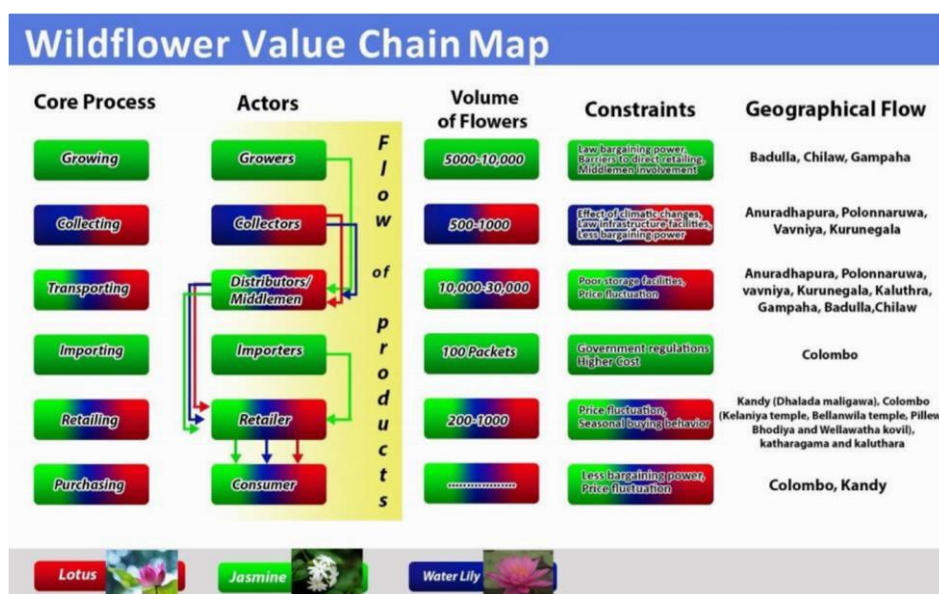
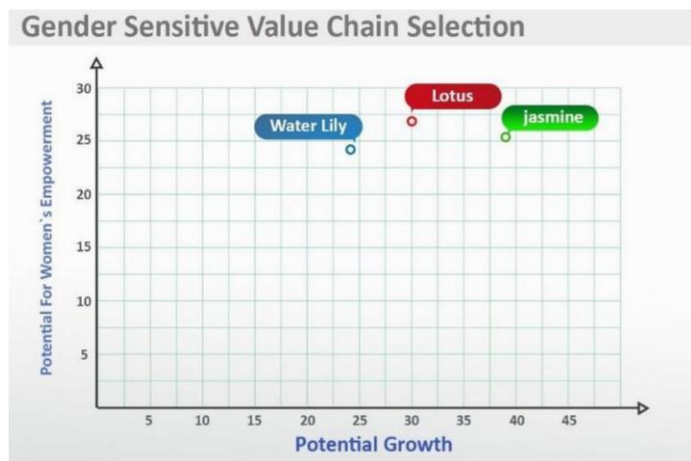


Figure 1: Wild flower value chain map

Downstream of the lotus and water lily value chains represent the distributors, retailers and consumers. Importers play an important role in jasmine value chain with distributors and retailers. Female participation in distribution and importing was less compared to males. Retailing functions of lotus and water lily governed by the females while males handled the



Conclusions, Implications and Significance

Study has identified key value chain actors of wild flower industry as growers, collectors, distributors, exporters, retailers and consumers. Actor analysis identified key roles in each node and majority of the collectors and growers were male, Jasmine value chain govern by the male actors where female participation was less. Retailing functions of lotus and water lily were governed by the females while males handled the jasmine retailing. The gender sensitive value chain selection recorded the higher score for Jasmine value chain in Growth potential criteria and higher score in Lotus value chain for women empowerment criteria. Higher postharvest losses occurred due to poor handling, packing, storing facilities, and unavailability of cold chain facilities. Opportunities for value addition showed the potential empowerment for both male and female actors of the wild flower value chain.

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