GENDER ISSUES IN BEEKEEPING: THE UGANDA CASE

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THEME: BEEKEEPING AGAINST POVERTY
INTRODUCTION:

Uganda is an Agricultural Country. There is a gender in balance in this sector. Workforce in this Sector is mainly Women approx. 80%. There is an increasingly need for women to participate actively in the Beekeeping sector. This will enhance increase in crops yield since bees play a major role in pollination of crops thus abundant harvest from the hives as the flowering plants/crops will be a source of nector and pollen for the bees.

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN BEEKEEPING

As far as we know, Beekeeping in Uganda has been exclusively male's activity since the time of our forefathers. The Development and promotion of beekeeping through the involvement of NGO's has ushered in Women's participation through Beekeeping Projects. Much as Women participation is on the increase there are still various factors limiting and constraining the practice e.g.

GROUP FORMATION: In Beekeeping is a new phenomenon. Many Women's Beekeeping groups/Association have just sprung up within half a decade or so. This mostly after hearing theoretical successes of their fellow women performances or after undertaking half-baked training. They graduate with high expectation of easily and quickly acquire wealth from the hives product within a short period. This expectation usually turns into frustration as Theory and Practical in most cases are not easily blended to produce result because of lack of adequate skills and training materials.
WOMEN'S ATTITUDE:

The majority of the Ugandans Women live in the rural areas of course with their husbands and the children. Few have had basic education due to cultural practices favoring boys. Even fewer had the opportunity to exposures to the world outside their homesteads and villages. Because of the tradition that men original task should be performed by men. This limits women active participation during siting hives, apiary, Management, Honey harvest, Honey & Bees wax processing. Let alone the sales of the hives products. Only few serious & exposed members of the Groups/Association participate actively.

MEN'S ATTITUDE:

The majority of Ugandan males still hold on to traditional of keeping Women out of most men's activity. However some enlightened men are gradually adopting changes in culture. Its just a matter of time when the limited contribution to decision making will be unlimited to the women. Thus a full time occupation with the hives for women without a hindrance from men.

UGANDA AGGRESSIVE BEE SPECIES:

Apis Millifera scutellata the dominant Bee Species in Uganda are mostly aggressive. Their nature usually does not permit Apiary management, Hives inspection and honey harvest during the daytime. The activity is best done either very early in the morning or late in the evening. This conflicts with the time when women are busiest with household cores in their homes.

WOMEN HEAVY WORK LOAD:

A gender analysis workshop conducted by Uganda National Farmers Association (UNFA) in 1999 for the District Farmers Leadership indicated that the Uganda rural women work long hours a day (16 - 18hours). This has been the order of the day since the time of our forefathers. The ushering in of Women's Beekeeping Projects adds to the work load. There is a great need for gradual change of culture and tradition to favour women where men take up what are termed as sole women's work along side the female counterpart so that women may have time to attend to the Beekeeping activities more seriously.

POSSIBILITY SOLUTIONS TO THE GENDER ISSUES:

The following are some of the possible solutions:

♦ Services near homes (water, health units)
♦ Tree planting (Agro Forestry) both for fuel and forage
♦ Biogas from zero grazing for cooking and lighting
Sensitization of both men and women on gender role and sex role. In most cases the two are mixed up
Credit Availability to both men and women
Labour saving techniques e.g. for honey and bees wax processing
Meeting time and place should be convenient to women
Training: Gender and leadership Training for both men and women
Promote: Beekeeping as income generating activity for women
Facilitate economic empowerment of women
Men to assist with some household task traditional label women tasks.

CONCLUSION:

The Uganda Rural Women Beekeepers need to take up challenges in the 21st century. No Beekeeping activity should be considered sole male. The courage and joy of making hives (traditional, improves & modern), Siting hives, Apiary management, Honey harvesting and Processing, Consumption and Sales of the hives products but most of all a gradual chance in culture / traditional will make Uganda a prosperous, healthier and wealthier nation. The theme of the congress would have become a reality. "Beekeeping Against Poverty". Long Live the Bees Race!

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GENDER ISSUES IN BEEKEEPING: THE UGANDA CASE (ABSTRACT)

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INTRODUCTION:
Uganda is an Agricultural Country. Workforce in the Crop Sector is mainly women. There is an increasing need for women to participate in the Beekeeping sector since bee’s plays a major role as pollinations. Increase in crops yield is expected and abundant harvests from the hives.

WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN BEEKEEPING:

As far as we know, Beekeeping in Uganda has been considered an exclusively male activity since the time of our forefathers. The Promotion of Beekeeping through the involvement of some NGOs has ushered in women’s Participation through Beekeeping Projects. Much as Women’s participation in Beekeeping is on the increase there are still various factors limiting and constraining the practices e.g.

GROUP FORMATION: Many women beekeepers come together to form Beekeeping Group or Association with very high expectation after hearing theoretical success of other women’s group. In practice Beekeepers Projects usually do not do well because of the following:-

WOMEN’S ATTITUDE: That difficult task should be performed by males limits women active participation during siting hives, Apiary management and honey harvest. Only few serious members of the group/Association participate.

UGANDA AGGRESSIVE BEE SPECIES: Does not allow Apiary management and hive inspection during daytime. The above is best done either very early in the morning or late evening. This conflicts with the time when women are busiest with household core in their homes.

WOMEN WORKLOAD: Uganda Rural Women work 16 – 18 hours a day. This has been since the time of our forefathers. The ushering in of Women Beekeeping Projects adds to more workloads. There is great need for gradual change of culture to favour women.

CONCLUSION:
The Uganda Rural Women Beekeepers need to take up challenges in the 21st Century. No beekeeping activity should be considered sole mâle’s activity. The courage and joy of making hives (both traditional and improve/modern), siting hives, maintenance of Apiary unit, honey harvesting, honey processing, consumption and sale of the hives products will make Uganda a prosperous, healthier and wealthier Nation. LONG LIVE THE BEES RACE!