

Chapter 2

Status of women in Brazil, disparities and efforts at Embrapa and in agriculture

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Global context

Reducing gender gaps in the labor market would allow an additional 204 million people to enter the global workforce by 2025. This increase could lead to a 3.9% increase in world gross domestic product (GDP). A large part of the jobs (162.4 million or 62%) would be generated in emerging countries, due to their relative size and the fact that they have the greatest gender disparities (Mujeres, 2017).

Among other factors, the expansion of the presence of women in positions of management, spaces of power and decision of the governments, in the spaces of social control of the public policies, in the parliament, in the political parties, in the social movements, in the unions, in the cooperatives, in the academic world and in access to professions considered to be male professions, as well as the construction within government of executive women's policy bodies (at different levels of the federation) broaden the horizon of the participation and political action of women and make a new configuration for the occupation and construction of these spaces with equality and social justice (Plano..., 2013).

Women situation in Brazil

Despite the fact that Brazilian women represent 52% of the population, Brazil still ranks 118th in the ranking of women's political participation in the 198 countries surveyed, according to the *Global data base of quotas for women* information report (Plano..., 2013).

Asymmetries appear in other contexts as a reflection of our culture, whose Greco-Jew-Christian roots are strongly marked by misogynistic components, according to Chassot (2004), and under which the environments, identities, social roles and the public/private dichotomies are constituted. Within this culture, two gender stereotypes function as barriers to women also in the field of science: a) maintaining the role of women as the main responsible for the care of the

offspring and the domestic environment (Chassot, 2004; Silva; Ribeiro, 2014); since science progresses rapidly and time is a critical factor regarding the essential need to update and produce new knowledge, which impels the researchers to a greater dedication to the professional career, to the detriment of the personal, family and social areas (Prado; Fleith, 2012); and b) the characterization of certain areas of knowledge as being typically masculine, as in the case of Agrarian Sciences (Cunha et al., 2014). Rigolin et al. (2013), studying science and technology in the context of the National Institutes of Science and Technology (INCTs), also recorded that Agricultural Sciences are one of the thematic areas in Brazil that brings together the fewest women leaders today.

Thus, the productive insertion of women is conditioned by the permanent tension between their family and professional responsibilities. The division of domestic burdens between women and men is one of the decisive factors for the achievement of female autonomy, especially the economic one. Currently, 78% of white girls and 86% of black girls perform domestic chores, while only 39% of white boys and 40% of black boys do these same tasks (Nações Unidas, 2016).

Even though they are employed in the labor market, women continue to be responsible for unpaid domestic work, which leads to the so-called double shift. In 2015, the total average weekly workload for women in Brazil was 7.5 hours greater than the weekly workload for men, and 53.6 hours a week is the average workload for women and 46.1 for men (Ipea, 2017).

In most developing countries, poorer women have less choice of reproductive planning, less access to prenatal care, and are more likely to give birth without the assistance of a health professional. Limited access to reproductive planning reflects in 89 million unintended pregnancies and 48 million abortions in developing countries each year (Mundos distantes, 2017). This does not only affect women's health, but it also limits their ability to enter or remain in the paid labor market and excludes the possibility of achieving financial independence. In Brazil, according to data for 2015, among the 22.5% of the young people, between 15 and 29 years of age, who did not study or work, more than 65% are women, and the majority (54.1%) had at least one son or daughter (População..., 2017).

Lack of access to services such as daycare centers also limit women in the search for jobs. For women in the labor market, the absence of paid maternity leave and the discrimination that many face at work when they become pregnant turn out to be a maternity penalty, which forces many to choose between advancing their careers and becoming mothers.

In general, the difficulties presented here are faced by all Brazilian women, but women living in rural areas face more specific problems, which will be discussed in this work.

Rural women

The common elements that characterize the lives of rural women in Latin America and the Caribbean are an overload of work, due to the sexual division of labor, which make them responsible for taking care of: sons, daughters, elderly men and women, sick men and women. Other common elements are the invisibility of the work they perform in the reproductive, productive and self consumption areas; low access to the means of production: land, water, seeds, inputs; the low quality of the lands that control agropastoral production; the difficulties they face for political participation, the little economic and decision-making autonomy they possess in patriarchal agreements; the precariousness and temporality of the works they carry out, which generates economic insecurity; as well as the low level of coverage in social protection systems. At the same time, the growing role of women in the defense of their territories, biodiversity and in the socioeconomic and cultural maintenance of the communities where they live is observed throughout the region (Nobre; Hora, 2017).

Regarding property of agricultural establishments, according to the [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations](#) (FAO, 2013), only 13% of the owners were women in the year 2013. This number almost doubled compared to the 1970s when it did not exceed 8%.

It is noteworthy that only in the Constitution of 1988 rural women received the status of rural producers, which allowed their access to labor rights. From then on, there was a strong effort to organize and document the rural women, since many did not even have identity cards. The Programa Nacional de Documentação da Trabalhadora Rural (National Program for the Documentation of the Female Rural Worker – PNDTR) assured rural women access to civil, social security and labor documents, free of charge and in the vicinity of their home, in order to achieve their status as citizens, strengthening their autonomy and enabling access to public policies, being PNDTR executed through itinerant mutual-aid groups (Brasil, 2007).

According to Di Sabbato et al. (2009, our translation) “the proportion of employed women without pay is significantly higher in agriculture and livestock,

compared to other sectors of the economy". Rural women also find limitations to have expanded and qualified access to rural credit, such as Pronaf, due to the limited economic autonomy and restricted possibility of resource management, according to Butto (2011), since they still find it difficult to master the spaces of management and commercialization of the production. Finally, according to Hernández (2009) there is the belief, on the part of many of them, that "men are the ones who know about business".

It is from this reality that the support and empowerment of women by Embrapa occurs in two strands. One is focused on the women who are part of Embrapa's staff and the other on rural women.

Efforts for gender equality within Embrapa

Embrapa is a company with a low number of women in its staff. According to data from 2016, only 30% of its staff are women (ratio 30♀/70♂), which corroborates the observations of some authors such as Rigolin et al. (2013) and Cunha et al. (2014) regarding the characterization of certain areas of knowledge as being typically male in Brazil, as is the case of Agrarian Sciences.

Efforts for the staff of female and male employees help achieve four targets (Figure 1), one of which is more general, regarding ending all forms of discrimination against women (5.1), and three more specific (5.4; 5.C ; 5.5), which seek to effect the first one.

The first target concerns the recognition and appreciation of unpaid care and domestic work, through the promotion of shared responsibility within the home and family (target 5.4), achieved at Embrapa from advances represented by means of benefits granted to male and female employees in relation to paternity leave, which began to occur from 2011–2012. Until then, Embrapa only complied with the legal provision of 5 calendar days, but the license was extended to 7 business days. In the collective bargaining agreement (ACT) 2013–2014, the paternity leave was extended to 10 working days, and since ACT 2016–2017, fathers have been guaranteed the right to enjoy 20 consecutive days, always with the objective of helping the mother during the puerperium.

The second specific target concerns the adoption and strengthening of sound national policies and applicable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (target 5.C), achieved through the partnership between Embrapa and the Secretaria Nacional de Políticas para as Mulheres

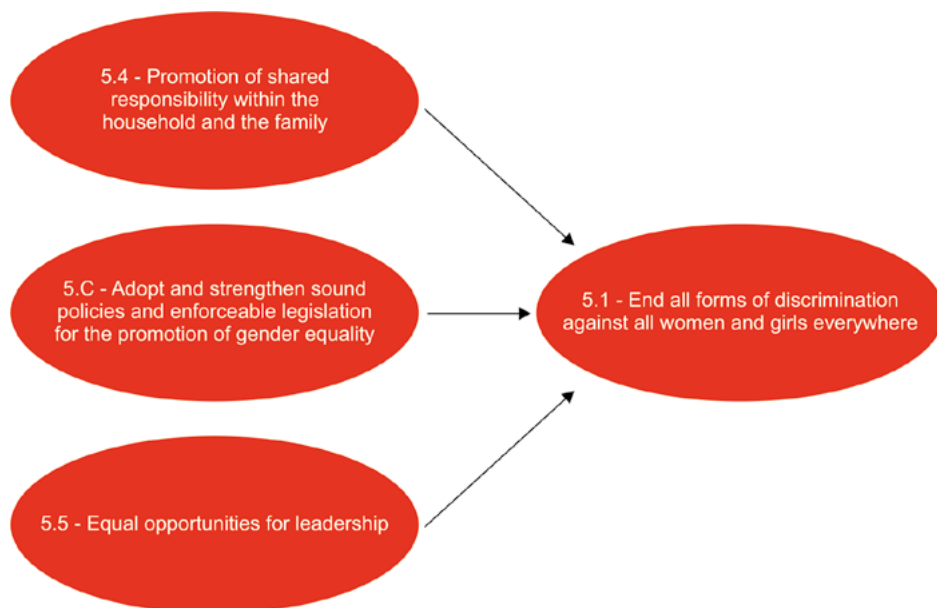


Figure 1. Efforts of Embrapa help achieve the targets to end all forms of discrimination against women.

(National Secretariat of Policies for Women – SPM) and active participation in the Gender and Race Pro-Equality Program since the 2nd edition (2007–2008 biennium), being Embrapa currently involved in the 6th edition of this program (2016–2018 biennium).

Target 5.5 refers to ensuring full and effective participation of women and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in public life. The occupation of management positions by women at Embrapa, in the year 2016, reflected the percentage of 31%. Comparing with 2006 (prior to joining the 2nd Edition of the Gender and Race Pro-Equality Program), it was observed that at Embrapa the proportion of women in its workforce was even lower, with only 25% of women working there (ratio 25♀/75♂). The 25% of management positions held by women reflected, in this period, the percentage of women at Embrapa. In other words, the percentage of management positions held by women was lower than that of management positions held by men in both 2006 and 2016, but women were not underrepresented; being only in a smaller number at Embrapa in relation to the number of men.

An important aspect, however, should be emphasized when management positions are separated by hierarchy levels. An analysis carried out in 2015 and

published in an institutional folder produced by the Gender, Race and Diversity Pro-Equality Program showed that in the higher positions, especially in the general heads of the Embrapa Decentralized Units, the percentage of women was much lower, equal to 14% only, when compared to the percentage of women in the Company (31%) and the supervisory positions occupied by them (33%) in that year. These data suggest that there is still a “glass ceiling” that prevents women from reaching these positions, which needs to be analyzed for effective action to be taken to mitigate this disparity.

Efforts of Embrapa for gender equality in agriculture

Embrapa's actions for rural women were linked to four targets (Figure 2). Actions that support the achievement of economic autonomy and/or access to natural resources (5.A) in synergy with government programs respond to the target regarding the adoption and the strengthening of sound national policies and applicable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels (5.C). To exemplify, we present Embrapa's work in the inclusion and productive organization of rural women in partnership with other governmental and non-governmental bodies, in which Embrapa subsidized, with data and information, the relations of these women with different institutions and the definition of policies access to and control of economic and natural resources, as will be presented in more detail in chapters 3, 4 and 5.

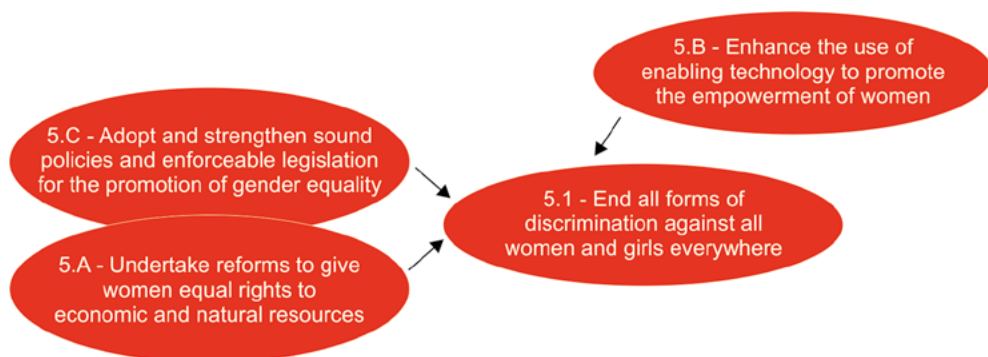


Figure 2. Efforts of Embrapa help rural women to achieve economic autonomy and/or access to natural resources for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women at all levels.

The use of base technologies, in particular information and communication technologies, to promote women's empowerment (target 5.B) is demonstrated from the formatting of radio and TV programs, virtual network, documentary video and interactive digital book dealing with the theme of gender and are accessible by different media, as presented in more detail in chapters 6 and 7. These efforts together help to end all forms of discrimination against all women (target 5.1).

Final considerations

Although it has advanced in many ways, women in Brazil still suffer from various types of discrimination and work longer hours than men, especially because of the non-shared responsibility within the home and family, which overwhelms and usurps many opportunities, in addition to lack of a good support structure, such as daycare centers. One of the main causes for this reality is the low political participation of women in Brazil, resulting in a country thought only from the male perspective. Therefore, the efforts of the country and of the institutions with this public are of extreme importance in order to achieve greater gender equality in both the urban and rural worlds.

In this sense, Embrapa contributes through its active participation in the Gender and Race Pro-Equality Program, which is a national policy to promote gender equality, seeking to create a work environment (internal and rural) where women and men have the same opportunities and are treated with the same respect, as described in the company's values, especially those related to Cooperation (we value teamwork, collaboration and transdisciplinarity), to Equality (we welcome everyone and value the differences in the pursuit of our goals) and to Ethics (we work for the common good, with respect for our neighbor and integrity). Equal opportunities for leadership should be measured each year, taking into account the different hierarchical levels, the information being widely disseminated so that everyone can be aware of the progress made and so that Embrapa is capable of quickly correcting possible distortions. The promotion of shared responsibility within the home and family still needs to advance, allowing parental care after the birth of daughters and sons to be exercised by both parents and not just by the mother. Support for reforms to give rural women equal rights to economic and natural resources should be strengthened within Embrapa through opportunities and recognition for research, development and innovation (RD&I) projects aimed at this specific audience, in which Information Technology and Communication (ICTs) should be designed to increase women's access to knowledge and information according to their specific demands.

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