THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY'S FIRST-GENERATION POVERTY REDUCTION PROJECTS: A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

- Department of Science and Technology (DST) introduced poverty reduction projects in 2001, mostly rural

- DST has begun thorough review of the impact and modalities of these projects, including evaluation by HSRC in 2006

- This paper uses data from that evaluation to address neglected issue, that is, *implications of these projects for women*

Outline of presentation

- <u>Concepts</u> – impact & empowerment

- <u>Impact</u> – what is the impact of these projects on women versus men?

- <u>Empowerment</u> – do these project *empower* rural women?

- <u>Conclusions</u> – What are the implications for DST's poverty reduction projects?

Concepts

- 'Impact' – concrete, short-term

- 'Empowerment' – both concrete and embodied, longer-term

Findings on 'impact'

- Women comprise approx 60%-70% of beneficiaries

- Women beneficiaries do not appear to be poorer (or from poorer HHs) to begin with than men beneficiaries
- 64% of women respondents are main breadwinners, versus 84% of men

Findings on 'impact' (cont...)

Relative welfare status before & after joining project

	Women		Men	
	before project	now	before project	now
Better-off	22%	69%	31%	70%
About average	20%	25%	8%	19%
Worse-off	58%	6%	61%	11%
Sum	100%	100%	100%	100%

Findings on 'impact' (cont…)

Person in household who brings in most income

	Women	Men
Self	64%	86%
Spouse	20%	4%
Parents / Parents-in-Law	8%	7%
Children	6%	0%
Other	2%	4%
Sum	100%	100%

Findings on 'empowerment'

- Women beneficiaries as likely to receive training as men, including technical training
- Women as likely to have supervisory function as men – except rarely as overall project managers
- Women do have 'voice' on projects
- However, women's actual jobs are much less likely to involve *use* of technologies central to the project

Findings on 'empowerment' (cont...)

Training received as part of or through the project

	Women	Men
% who received training	74%	73%
% who didn't receive training	26%	27%

Findings on 'empowerment' (cont...)

**Participation through speaking at project meetings
(proxy for 'voice')**

	Women	Men
Often	52%	36%
Sometimes	27%	43%
Rarely	9%	14%
Never	11%	7%
Sum	100%	100%

Findings on 'empowerment' (cont...)

Current responsibilities and post project hopes

	Women	Men
Current function on project involves use of new or advanced technologies	5%	27%
Hopes of using new technical skills post-project	10%	26%

Conclusions

- DST poverty reduction projects do have positive impact on rural women
- DST poverty projects do empower rural women, but only to a point
- Key recommendation:
  - Ensure women beneficiaries are not only introduced to new technologies, but entrusted with their use