

Household dynamics and gender relations in managing risk and adapting to change in semi-arid Africa and Asia

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Research Question, Locations and Methodology

How do changing household structures and relationships in urban, rural, and peri urban areas of semi-arid regions shape the ability of men and women to respond to risks and adapt to climate change?

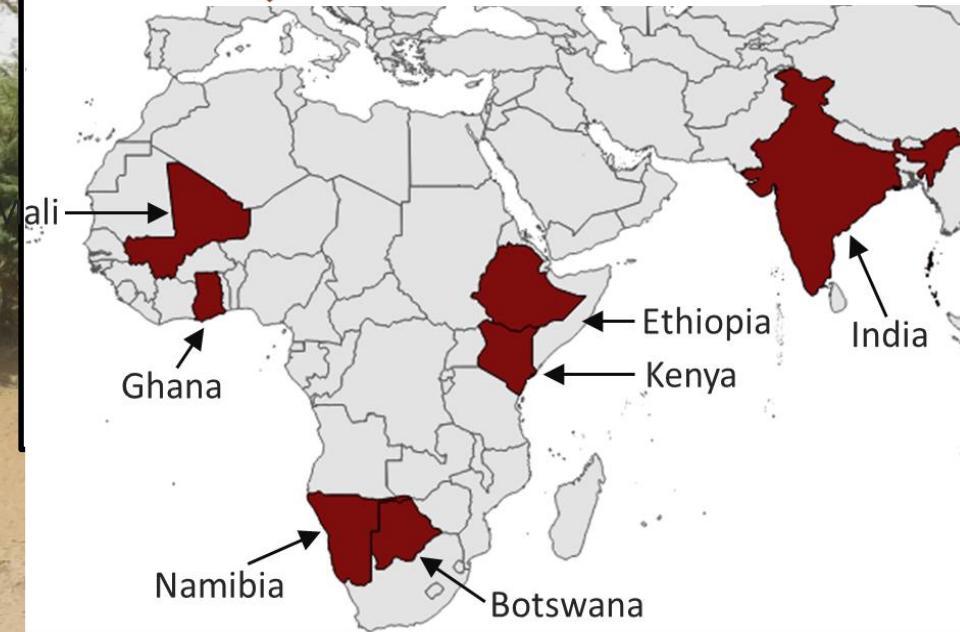
8 Case Studies

Mixed Methods

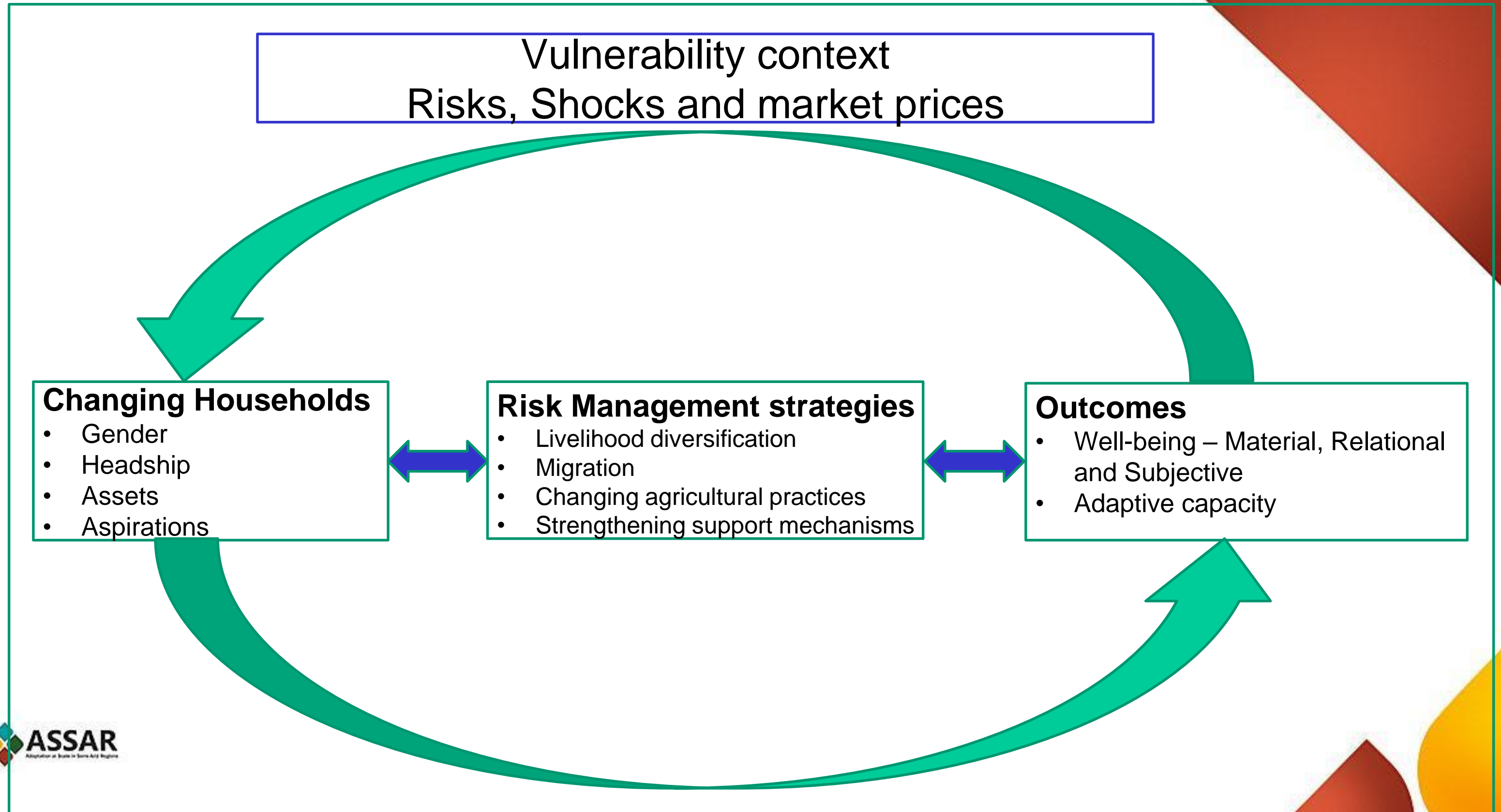
Collaborative process – agreed basic question

Dynamic and responsive to field realities

Ethical standards followed



Policy and institutional context - Governance, social norms and rights



Responses: Livelihood diversification



- Options for diversification are gendered, shaped by cultural norms, mobility, negotiating power, location.
- Switching tasks, challenging norms
- *"Absolutely, the change in me happened because of my working. Earlier I was afraid of going alone to the next street. Even I needed my husband's support to go to my mother's place."*



Responses: Migration vs Agriculture

Women take on additional responsibilities in agriculture in male absence
Remittances invested in agriculture; over-exploitation of ground water





Response: Investments in Social Support

- New forms of cooperation emerging between men and women (domestic water collection in Tamil Nadu)
- New household structures emerging – cooperation between mothers and daughters (Kenya)
 - Managing as a single woman is not easy, but not impossible
- Networks with kin-groups, friends and neighbours (Namibia)



Outcomes: material wellbeing



- ❖ Women central to ensuring food security: younger women have responsibility but no control (Mali)
- ❖ Shift to cash crops reduces women's control and increases dependence on market availability and prices (India, Ghana)
- ❖ Increases work burden and leaves little time for leisure.
- ❖ Nutrition??

Relational wellbeing: social support and cohesion



Household, Communities and the State

- Multi-generational and multi-locational households creating new forms of cooperation and sharing
- In male absence, cooperation between women - within households (matrifocal) and communities (asset and labour sharing groups)
- Claiming entitlements from the State



Lucia Scodanibbio



Subjective/Personal Wellbeing: Agency and Aspirations



- ❖ Increased women's agency, exposure to new opportunities, networks and information can enhance status and improve subjective wellbeing
- ❖ In the long-term, can expose them to precarious livelihoods; unsafe working conditions; health risks
- ❖ Aspirations relate to education, better jobs and improved lifestyles

"Our dreams and aspirations for the future are to see our kids educated and become better off than they are today so that they can take care of us in future."

(Comfort, married woman, Lawra District, Ghana)

Implications for Sustainable Adaptation

Policy and Practice

- ◇ **Relationships are key:** It's not just about women or men in isolation, it's about how they interact and respond to changes. Work with both to challenge social norms & patriarchal traditions
- ◇ **Households not homogenous entities:** Recognizing gendered roles, contributions and needs in adaptation interventions can help create an enabling environment through investments in supportive structures; for example, providing childcare, accessible education, or timely credit.
- ◇ **Strengthen cooperation** between household members across generations, rather than targeting resources only to the head.
- ◇ **Wellbeing outcomes** are not just material, but relational and personal too. Improved food security may come at the cost of perceptions of illbeing.
- ◇ **Diverse voices** to be heard in formulating adaptation plans, not just dominant men.

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