Gender in technological innovations: some reflections from Kenya

Ann Kingiri
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Outline of Presentation

- Some definitions – in gender discourse
- Reflect in brief why is it important to understand gender in relation to development
- Use two cases (energy technologies & ICT in rural extension)
- Suggestions for mainstreaming gender in innovation policies

Definitions: Gender

- Gender is about what men and women do; their degree of access, control and authority over resources and decision-making; and the abilities to discharge the duties (what they do) effectively.

- The word 'gender' was used by scholars like Ester Boserup, Ann Oakley and others in 1970's to emphasise that everything women and men do, and everything expected of them, with the exception of their sexually distinct functions (childbearing etc.) can change, and does change, over time and according to changing and varied social, economical, political, and cultural factors.
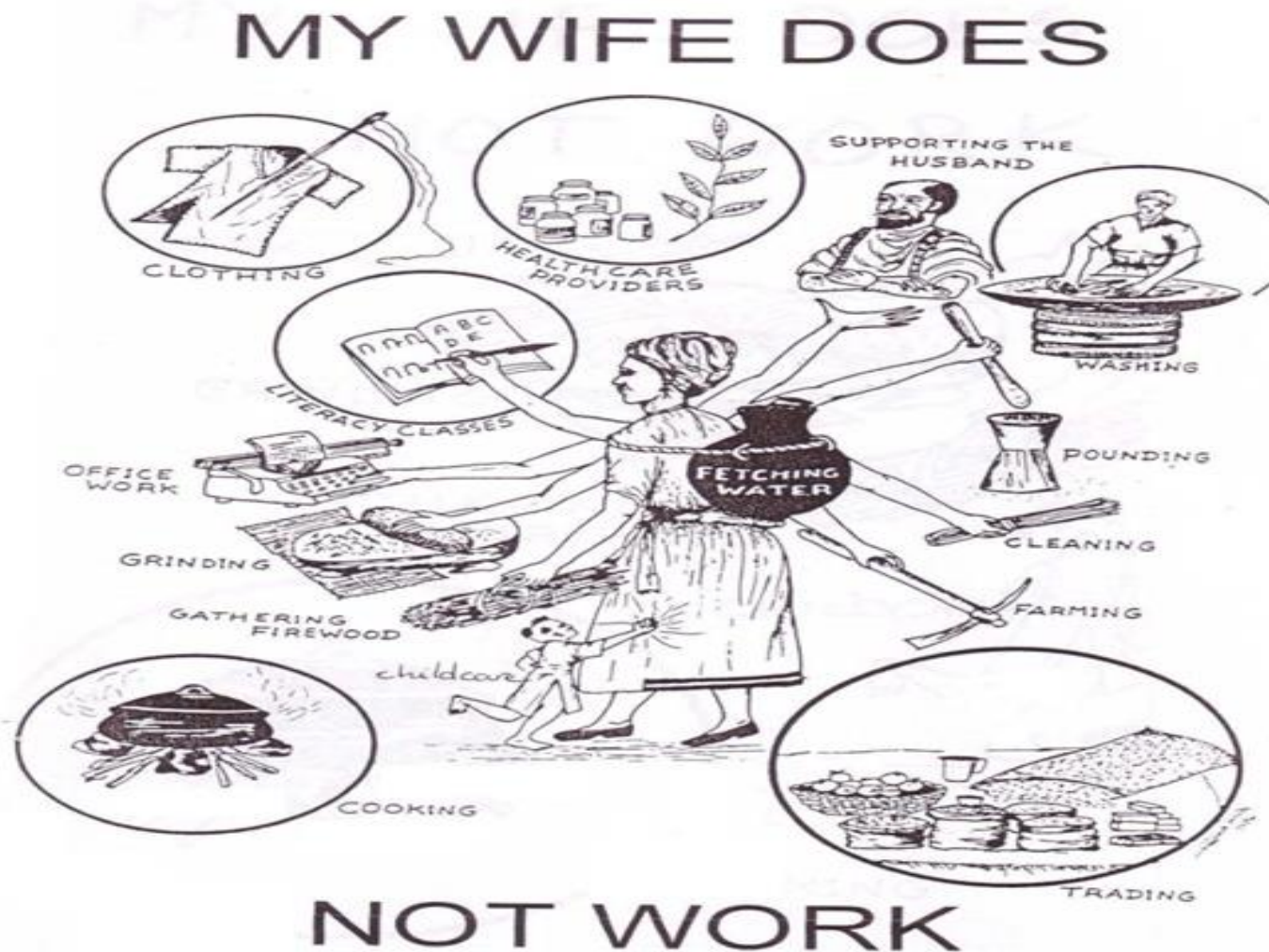
Gender Roles

- People are born female or male, but learn to be girls and boys who grow into women and men. They are taught what the appropriate behaviour and attitudes, roles and activities are for them, and how they should relate to other people. This **learned behaviour** is what makes up **gender identity**, and **determines gender roles** and **responsibilities**.

- Thus, Gender roles are the **"social definition"** of women and men and vary among different societies and cultures, classes and ages, and during different periods in history (Lober, 1994)

Gender roles cont'd

While both men and women are involved in productive work, much of the reproductive work is undertaken by women, and this involves many tasks which are not recognized as work or paid for.

Gender roles: Productive & reproductive roles

MY WIFE DOES

CLOTHING

HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

SUPPORTING THE HUSBAND

WASHING

LITERACY CLASSES

OFFICE WORK

FETCHING WATER

POUNDING

GRINDING

CLEANING

GATHERING FIREWOOD

childcare

FARMING

COOKING

TRADING

NOT WORK

Other Definitions

- **Gender Equality:** refers to equal opportunities and outcomes for women and men

- **Gender Blindness:** Conscious development of objectives, plans and programs in an organisation or institution with no effort to recognize or incorporate gender issues

- **Gender Gap:** used to refer to the difference in the scores between men and women on attitudes, interests, behaviours, knowledge and perspectives on particular issues such as policy preferences and voting preferences.

- **Gender Mainstreaming:** Process whereby gender concerns are raised routinely within the everyday operations of an institution or organisation, and are resolved in a gender-just manner in normal operations.

  – GM acknowledges that all activities and operations under any programme have a gender impact and do not automatically benefit men and women equally.

- **Inclusive innovation:** the work of Globelics scholars (Judith, Susan, Joanna Chataway etc)

Why is it important to understand gender?

Understanding gender concepts is important in **promoting gender/inclusivity perspectives** in any development/innovation-related agenda.

Since the mid 1980s to date (with SDGs), there has been a growing consensus that sustainable development and related transformation requires an understanding of both women's and men's roles (also PWDs, youth, informal sector etc) and responsibilities within the community and their relations to each other.
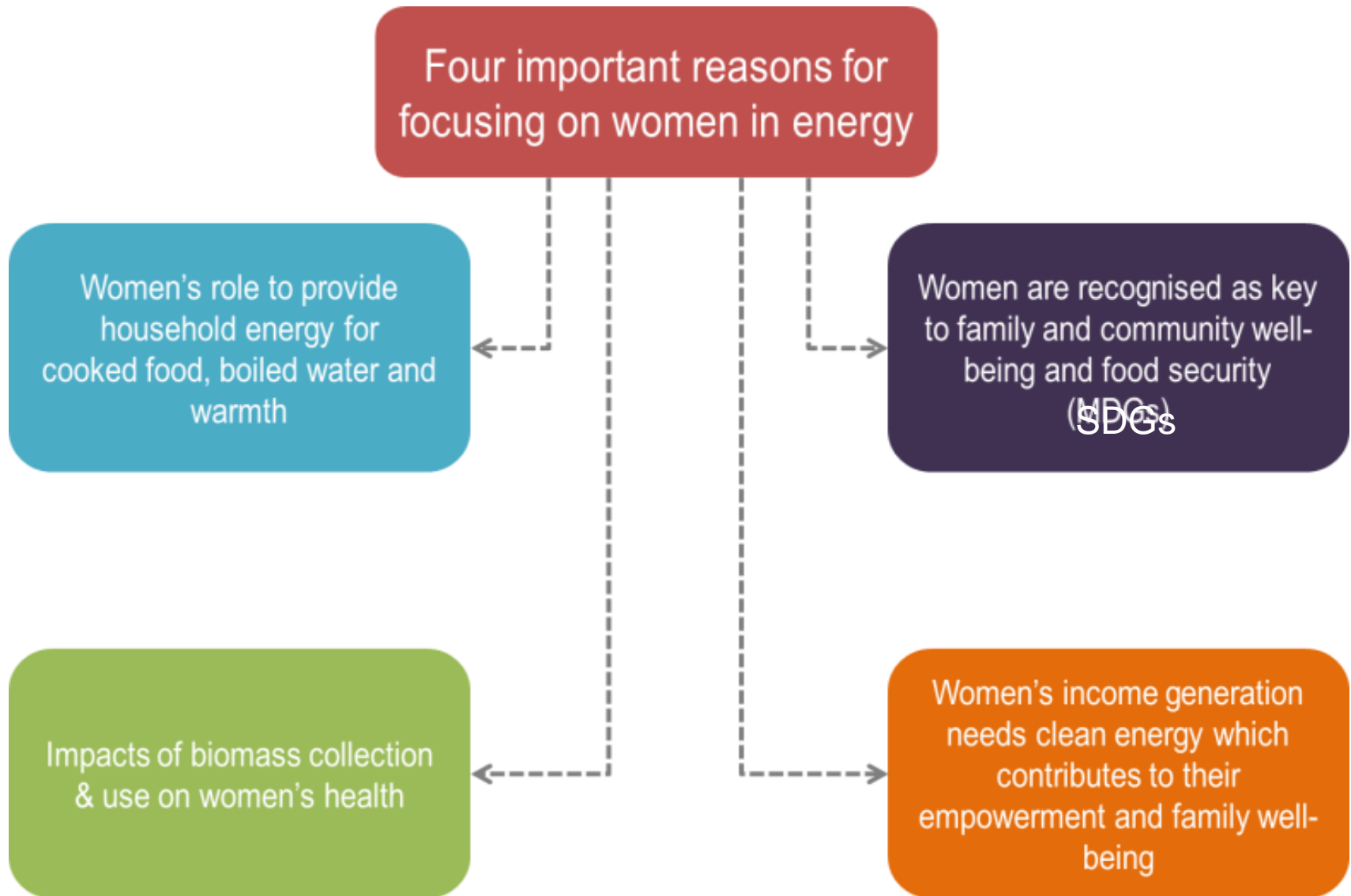
Gender & Development; Gender & Innovation: This strand of literature shows that women (as purportedly disadvantaged social group) play a key economic role in a development especially in SSA : e.g. in Agric as agents for combating poverty & food security through technological empowerment.

What about inclusive innovation?

Examples 1: Gender & Energy
# Discourse plus related technological innovations

Four important reasons for focusing on women in energy

Women's role to provide household energy for cooked food, boiled water and warmth

Women are recognised as key to family and community well-being and food security (MDGs)

SDGs

Impacts of biomass collection & use on women's health

Women's income generation needs clean energy which contributes to their empowerment and family well-being

Engendering: Gender analysis in Energy project/s

Gender Analysis

Why?	How? =Analysis	Results
Recognizing the differences in roles and needs.	Who? What?	Sex and Age Disaggregated Data and Information. = Guides Targeting
Recognizing the different power relations in household resource use	Who? What? Why?	Decision making = Participation & Opportunities
Recognizing different uses for energy	Who? What? When? Why?	Energy Resources, Needs & Opportunities = Actual priorities.
Understanding the differential impacts of energy access and use for men, women, boys and girls	Who? How? Why?	There is always a difference = One size doesn't fit all.

PISCES project – Qualitative evidence

Improved Cookstoves (energy efficient technology) and Gender mainstreaming
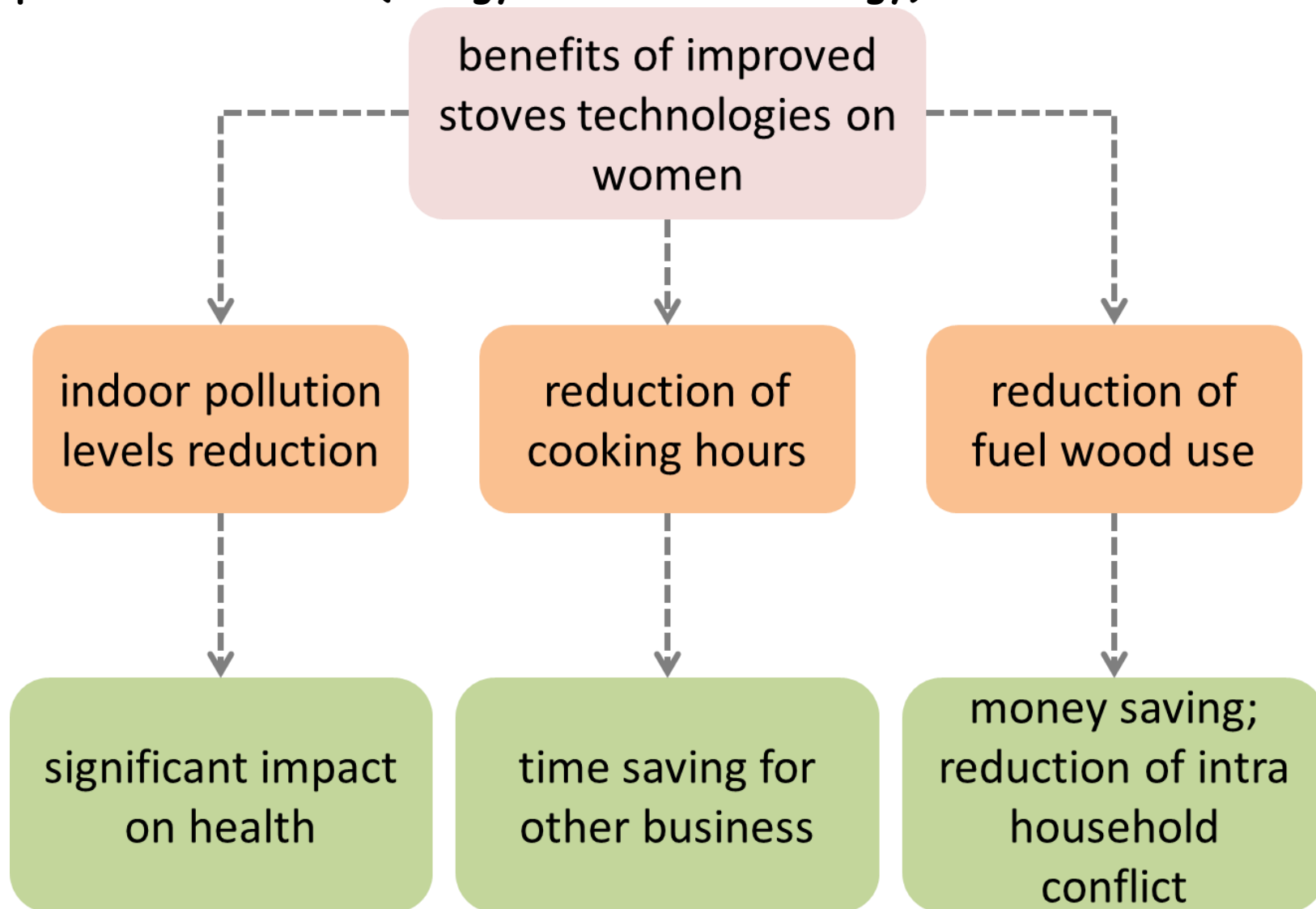
EXAMPLE 2

Exploring the inclusivity in Kenya's extension & advisory service as part of agricultural innovation system

Analytical and methodological framework

- Study uses innovation system framework to situate extension service within the broader AIS.
  - Explores the institution concept and gender concepts
- It also uses the inclusive concept drawn from inclusive innovation literature (e.g. Heeks et al. 2013 & 2014)
  - Explores inclusion in the context of engagement of actors in the innovation process
- Methodology – Qualitative (analysis of secondary and primary data e.g. from interviews).

Extension approaches in Kenya: results 1

- Data identified a number of extension approaches
  - Individual, group based or participatory approaches
  - Information and communication technology (ICT) and media based advisory services
- ICT has emerged as a tool that can enhance flexible learning pathways and extension approaches.
- Adoption of ICT-based solutions promote skills development and training within non-formal and informal settings.
- *Need to understand the impact of ICT-based learning in different contexts especially rural areas with regards to inclusion.*

Extension approaches in Kenya: results 2

- Analysis of the approaches in terms of reaching out the rural farmers especially women reveals the following:

- Resource and gender based exclusion
  - ICT based approaches are commercial in nature hence expensive and tend to exclude the resource poor farmers; they are also not gender sensitive (tend to exclude women).

- Study exposed significant non-technological forms of innovation (e.g. social capital as a form of institutional innovation and social innovation) usually unaccounted for in AIS that is embedded in ICT based approaches (as well as other approaches)

- Any study intended to engender ICT based tools must take these factors into consideration

Suggestions for mainstreaming gender in innovation & transformation innovation policies

- Awareness creation is needed – at all levels
- building competences (at all levels -policy makers, educationists, communities)
  - STI research focus on those areas that impact women & other social groups (agriculture, energy, water and sanitation, ICT etc)- facilitate entrepreneurship training to these social groups - women/girls in ways that enhance innovation
  - Consider gender mainstreaming that embraces innovation systems thinking (actors, institutions, policies, practices etc).
  - Education/training curriculum review to embrace systems thinking (innovation studies that put emphasis on the social science aspects of STEM).
  - Equip practitioners/planners/policy makers with skills and tools for mainstreaming gender in STI

Suggestions for mainstreaming gender in innovation policies

- Review of policies/strategies towards engendering them and provide mechanisms for enforcement and monitoring

- Facilitate sharing of experiences on gender & STI (e.g. create platforms for information dissemination and outreach)

- Development of framework for **gender analysis** and gender mainstreaming to embrace **gender learning** and **system empowerment**

  - Gender learning & system empowerment must be aligned to gender goal (empower; increase participation in decision making etc)

Thank you for listening

- Q & A Session