

Case Study on the Role of Women in Rural Transport: Access of Women to Domestic Facilities

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Summary:

In rural Africa it is women who bear the greatest part of the transport burden. Understanding their transport patterns is a first step in aiming to reduce their onerous task. Comprehensive village-level and transport surveys (VLTTTS) and associated case studies have been carried out under the Rural Travel and Transport Project (RTTP) to gain insights into the travel patterns of rural people and assess the potential for, and constraints to, sustainable improvements in the level of access of rural populations in SSA to economic (particularly agricultural) and social services. The case studies focus on the role of intermediate means of transport in improving mobility and the role of transport in women's daily lives. This case study assesses the link between transport and the provision of water supply, woodlots, and grinding mills - referred to as domestic facilities.

In general, the transport efficiency of rural households can be enhanced in two ways: by increasing mobility through improvements in the rural transport system (better roads and footpaths and the use of intermediate means of transport); and by locating facilities and services closer to people to reduce the distance that they need to travel. Recognizing that in many of the poorest areas of rural Africa, domestic travel (for water, firewood and food processing needs) accounts for the major share of women's transport burden, this study explores the impact of provision of such facilities as water supply, wood lots, fuel efficient stoves and grinding mills on women. The author asserts that in order for these interventions to have long-term positive impact on women, women have to be involved in all stages of planning, from the selection of priority interventions to planning for the implementation and subsequent maintenance.

Also see:

Bryceson, D. F. and Howe, J. 1993. "Rural Household Transport in Africa: reducing the burden on women." **World Development**; v.21 no. 11 pp. 1715-28.

Levy, C. 1992. "Gender and Development: A Practical Guide: Transport." in **Gender and Development: A Practical Guide**. Ostergard, Lise (eds.) Routledge: London and New York. pp. 94-109.