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Women Empowerment Plays a Crucial Role in Agriculture

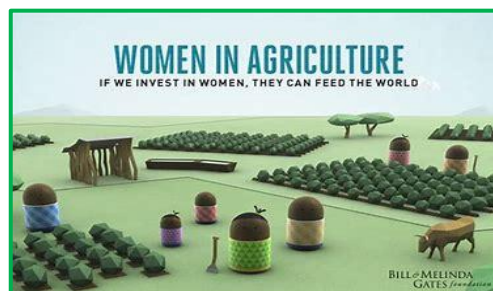
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The international community is becoming more and more aware of the need to address gender-related challenges in agriculture through national, regional, and international collaborations and initiatives in order to achieve more sustainable and broad-based agricultural growth.

There is need for reorientation of the agricultural research agenda to overcome the existing gaps and to face the emerging challenges of sustainable development and livelihood of resource poor smallholders, especially women farmers. We are quite aware of the problems which women face at home and at farm. But now is the time for a thorough examination of the issues, followed by the right course of action to address them. In order to increase agricultural productivity and empower farm women, appropriate technologies must be provided. It's important to take further proactive measures to support and assist farm women. Overview For a variety of reasons, agriculture is not operating up to par in many emerging nations. Among these is the fact that women do not always have access to the tools and opportunity necessary to maximize their time. Although women are employed, farmers, and business owners, they almost always face more barriers than males to obtaining markets, services, and other productive resources. This "gender gap" lowers their productivity and diminishes their contributions to the agricultural industry and the accomplishment of more general goals of social and economic development. Reducing poverty and hunger, fostering economic growth, and raising agricultural output would all result from closing the gender gap in agriculture. Though they are also citizens with an equal claim to the opportunities, protections, and services offered by their governments and the global community, women might be viewed as "productive resources" alongside males. Gender equality is a Millennium Development Goal (MDG) in its own right, and it is directly related to the achievement of the MDG targets on reducing extreme poverty and hunger. Agricultural policy-makers and development practitioners have an obligation to ensure that women are able to participate fully in, and benefit from, the process of agricultural development. At the same time, promoting gender equality in agriculture can help reduce extreme poverty and hunger. Equality for women would be good for agricultural development, and agricultural development. The roles and status of women in agriculture and rural areas vary widely by region, age, ethnicity and social class and are changing rapidly in some parts of the world.



Gender inequality in agriculture

Structural Barriers: Discriminatory gender norms, policies, and institutions create structural barriers that limit women's access to resources, services, and opportunities in agriculture. These norms reinforce traditional roles and expectations, hindering women's participation and decision-making power.

Education and Training: Gender disparities in education and training impact women's skills and knowledge. Limited access to agricultural training programs and extension services prevents women from adopting improved practices and technologies.

Access to Resources: Women have less access to essential resources such as credit, seeds, fertilizers, and modern technologies. This lack of access affects their productivity and income. Additionally, women's labor is often unpaid or undervalued.

Market Access: Women face challenges in accessing markets, including transportation, information, and market networks. Lack of market access limits their ability to sell produce and earn income.

Social Norms: Deep-rooted gender norms perpetuate stereotypes about women's roles in agriculture. These norms influence decision-making, division of labor, and resource allocation within households.

Unpaid Care Work: Women often bear the burden of unpaid care work, including household chores and childcare. This reduces their time and energy for productive agricultural activities.

Importance of empowering women

Economic Growth: Empowering women in agriculture increases their access to resources such as land, credit, and markets. This leads to higher agricultural productivity, increased incomes for women farmers, and overall economic growth in rural communities.

Food Security: Women play a significant role in food production, processing, and distribution, especially in developing countries. By empowering women with resources, knowledge, and decision-making power in agriculture, food security can be improved, ensuring better nutrition for families and communities.

Nutrition: Women often have a better understanding of household dietary needs and can prioritize nutrition in farming practices. Empowering women in agriculture can lead to diversified crop production, including fruits, vegetables, and other nutritious foods, improving the overall health of communities.

Environmental Sustainability: Research suggests that women are often more environmentally conscious in their farming practices, employing techniques that conserve soil, water, and biodiversity. By empowering women farmers with access to education and resources, agricultural practices can become more sustainable, mitigating the impact of climate change.

Social Cohesion: When women are empowered in agriculture, they gain more influence in community decision-making processes. This can lead to greater social cohesion, as women advocate for issues such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure development, benefiting the entire community.

Resilience: Women's empowerment in agriculture can enhance the resilience of farming communities to external shocks, such as climate change, natural disasters, or economic downturns. When women have control over resources and decision-making, they can adapt more effectively to changing circumstances and protect their livelihoods.

Overall, empowering women in agriculture is not only a matter of social justice but also a strategic imperative for achieving sustainable development goals, including poverty reduction, food security, and environmental sustainability.

Technology plays a crucial role in addressing gender inequality

Access to Information and Training: Technology can deliver agricultural information, weather forecasts, and best practices directly to women farmers' mobile phones. This empowers them with knowledge on crop management, pest control, and market prices. Online courses and e-learning platforms provide training on modern farming techniques, financial literacy, and business skills. Women can access these resources from their homes or local community centers.

Improved Productivity and Efficiency:

Technologies like GPS, drones, and sensors enable precise planting, irrigation, and fertilization. Women can optimize resource use, reduce waste, and enhance crop yields.



Access to small-scale machinery, such as mini-tractors or seed planters, reduces labor-intensive tasks. Women can save time and effort, leading to increased productivity.

Financial Inclusion and Access to Markets: Mobile money and digital banking services allow women to receive payments, save, and access credit. This enhances their financial independence and ability to invest in agriculture. Online platforms connect women farmers directly with buyers, eliminating intermediaries. This improves market access and ensures fair prices for their produce.

Agro-Processing and Value Addition: Solar Dryers and Food Processing Technologies help women preserve and add value to their agricultural products. Drying, milling, and packaging enhance shelf life and marketability. Women can use biogas for cooking, reducing their reliance on firewood and improving household health.



Digital Surveys and Data Collection Tools: Collecting sex-disaggregated data helps identify specific challenges faced by women. This informs targeted interventions and policy decisions.

Women's Farmer Groups: Technology can facilitate knowledge sharing, collective decision-making, and peer support. Women can learn from each other and advocate for their rights.

Conclusion

Women the integral part of society play a significant role sustainable development in economy through their household and other activities. Still they are ignored and feel discrimination and many obstacles in every aspects of life. Empowering women is a pivotal role in the empowerment of family and society as well. Women empowerment would lead towards improving livelihood by reducing food insecurity because they can spend more on their families. Women must have financial liberty and role in decision making.