

Women Participation In Agriculture In Nepal: A Policy Review

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ABSTRACT:- With more than 74% of women working in agriculture, Nepal has a feminized agricultural sector that is made worse by a large male migration from rural areas. Women farmers play a vital role in agriculture, but they also confront discrimination in the workplace, low pay, and limitations on their ability to own land. These problems are intended to be addressed by government programs like the Women Farmers' Development Division (WFDD) and the Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS), however challenges including financial limitations still exist. A more inclusive and equitable agriculture sector requires a diversified approach that includes strong law enforcement, more stringent measures regarding the gender wage gap, and thorough gender mainstreaming.

Key words: Agriculture, Feminization, Gender, and Policy

I. INTRODUCTION

Over 74% of women in Nepal are actively involved in farming, demonstrating how feminization of agriculture has become a dominant trend in the country (FAO, 2017). This problem has been linked to the large-scale male exodus from rural areas, which has left women with more home and farm-related duties (World Bank, 2019). Notwithstanding the vital role that women farmers play, their labour is frequently disregarded and goes unappreciated, this adds to the high levels of drudgery (Ghale and Gurung, 2020).. The increased responsibilities that women bear as a result of men leaving the country aggravate this predicament. In addition to labor-intensive jobs, women are involved in agriculture in managerial capacities as well as in sectors like finance, crop production, and land administration (Gartaula, 2010). As UN Women noted in 2015, restrictions on land ownership are among the difficulties faced by women farmers. Draw attention to the difficulties that Nepali women farmers confront as a result of the feminization of agriculture, with a focus on the limitations placed on their ability to own land and the differences in payment between genders. Over time, there has been a noticeable change in Nepal's female agricultural participation dynamics. Women made up 35.4% of those engaged in agriculture as economically active individuals in 1980; by 2017, that percentage had risen to 50% (Kaini, 2017). However, their participation has been hampered by ingrained cultural structures, traditional beliefs, historical behavioral discrimination, and skewed perceptions of women's economic contributions. An additional obstacle to women's empowerment in agriculture is the dearth of aggregated data, which is necessary to promote gender parity (NPC, 2020). Remarkably, the research area's average cultivated land size is 0.53 hectares, which is little less than the 0.57 hectares per household national average(AICC,2017).. The idea that only men can be farmers and adapt to new technologies is perpetuated by gender prejudice and patriarchal attitudes in institutions, which restricts the knowledge and training that is available to female farmers. In order to genuinely empower women in agriculture, these obstacles must be overcome, gender stereotypes must be destroyed, and women must have equal access to opportunities and resources in this vital industry (FAO, 2010). It also intends to examine current government policies and programs that address gender disparities in agriculture and talk about the challenges that stand in the way of their successful execution.

II. METHODOLOGY

Perform a thorough analysis of the literature, reports, and studies that are currently available on Nepal's gender-based wage gaps, land ownership, women's participation in farming, and the feminization of agriculture. Examine current agricultural policies, such as the Industrial Enterprise Act of 2016, the Women Farmers' Development Division (WFDD), and the Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS). Examine how well these policies are fostering gender equality and note any gaps or barriers.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Women's land ownership is restricted even if the new constitution encourages policies for agricultural land reforms and prohibits absentee land ownership. This barrier has a big impact on the independence and self-determination of women working in agriculture. Gender inequality in agriculture is made worse by the problem of gender-biased salary disparities (ADB, 2010). Women in Nepal make almost 50% less money than males do. Despite laws requiring equal pay for men and women, this salary gap still exists (UNESCO, 2015). Gender inequities in agriculture are the focus of government programs like the Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS) launched (MOALD, 2014). The granting of a 10% quota for women in agricultural training programs, marketing, and training are all key components of the ADS's strategy to increase women's participation. In addition, the Women Farmers' Development Division (WFDD) was founded in 1992 with the goal of integrating gender concerns into agricultural programs and policies. However, there are obstacles to these projects' execution, such as a lack of budgetary constraints, insufficient legal provisions, and integrated gender mainstreaming procedures. The Industrial Enterprise Act of 2016 provides discounts and priority for female entrepreneurs, demonstrating attempts to support women's entrepreneurship. However, obstacles still exist in moving from production to successful marketing. Gender inequities in agriculture are the focus of government programs like the Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS) launched in 2014 by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MOALD, 2014). The granting of a 10% quota for women in agricultural training programs, marketing, and training are all key components of the ADS's strategy to increase women's participation. In addition, the Women Farmers' Development Division (WFDD) was founded in 1992 with the goal of integrating gender concerns into agricultural programs and policies. However, there are obstacles to these projects' execution, such as a lack of budgetary constraints, insufficient legal provisions, and integrated gender mainstreaming procedures (NPC, 2017). The Industrial Enterprise Act of 2016 provides discounts and priority for female entrepreneurs, demonstrating attempts to support women's entrepreneurship. However, obstacles still exist in moving from production to successful marketing (MOLJPA 2016).

A multifaceted approach would be beneficial to address the urgent issues facing Nepalese women farmers and advance gender equality in the agricultural sector in Nepal. First and foremost, it is imperative that laws promoting women's access to and control over agricultural land be effectively implemented and enforced in order to strengthen women's land ownership rights. A deliberate effort should also be made to close the gender wage gap by enforcing equal pay laws more strictly and increasing public awareness of them. Enhancing agricultural policies is essential, necessitating larger budgetary allotments and strong oversight and assessment systems to guarantee the accomplishment and influence of programs aimed at women farmers. All tiers of agricultural programme should incorporate gender mainstreaming techniques, along with specialized policymaker training. In order to promote women's entrepreneurship, credit and financial restrictions must be removed, and thorough training programs must be in place to ease the transition from manufacturing to successful marketing. Allocating resources and conducting frequent gender audits are necessary to ensure the smooth operation of gender equality committees, such as the Gender Responsive Budget Committee. The promotion of inclusive decision-making at the home, cooperative and community levels is vital, as is the funding of STEM and other agricultural education programs for women (MoALD, 2017). Comprehensive gender-focused projects can be fostered through collaboration with development partners and civil society organizations, which can access extra resources and experience. Last but not least, a persistent and inclusive approach to gender equality in Nepal's agricultural environment will benefit from a commitment to routinely assessing and revising policies based on feedback and shifting socioeconomic situations (CEDAW, 2011). Promoting gender equality is the responsibility of government groups like the Gender Responsive Budget Committee (GRBC), which was founded in 2014. Unfortunately, the GRBC's ability to adopt gender-sensitive policy is hampered by issues like a lack of gender auditing and resource limitations.

IV. CONCLUSION

Enforcing land ownership laws, reducing pay disparities, improving policies, removing financial barriers, encouraging inclusive decision-making, and making a commitment to continuous policy evaluation and revision are all essential for empowering women in Nepal's agriculture and achieving gender equality.

RECOMMENDATION

- Assure the efficient execution and enforcement of laws that support women's ownership and access to agricultural land. Women's land ownership rights will be reinforced by this, promoting their independence and autonomy in the agricultural sector.
- Implement proactive strategies to reduce the gender pay gap, such as public awareness campaigns and strict enforcement of equal pay regulations. This will help close the pay gap that exists between men and women in the agriculture industry.
- Give agricultural policies more funding and create effective methods for monitoring and evaluating them. This would guarantee the efficacy and significance of initiatives like the Agriculture Development Strategy (ADS) that seek to empower women farmers.
- Adopt gender mainstreaming strategies in all agricultural programme tiers and provide policymakers with specialized training. This strategy will foster inclusivity by incorporating gender issues into the planning and execution of agricultural projects.

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