



Research Article

Women in Agribusiness: Barriers and Opportunities

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Abstract

This article investigates the status of women in agribusiness across Africa, outlining the significant barriers they face—ranging from structural inequalities to lack of access to land, credit, and markets—as well as the unique opportunities for empowerment and economic transformation inherent in the sector. Using recent data and case studies, the article explores actionable strategies to close gender gaps, promote inclusive growth, and enhance the visibility and impact of women-led agribusiness endeavors.

Keywords: women in agribusiness, gender inequality, Africa, land access, credit access, market access, empowerment, inclusive growth, women-led enterprises, economic transformation

INTRODUCTION

Women form the backbone of Africa's agricultural sector, contributing an estimated 60–80% of food production across Sub-Saharan Africa^{[1][2]}. Yet, they remain dramatically underrepresented in ownership, leadership, and the profitable nodes of agribusiness value chains. The transformation of agribusiness into a more inclusive and equitable sector is central to Africa's sustainable development, poverty reduction, and food security ambitions.

2. Current Landscape of Women in Agribusiness

- Over 50% of Africa's agricultural labor is female^{[3][4]}.
- Women generate up to 80% of food in Sub-Saharan Africa but own less than 20% of agricultural land^{[1][5]}.
- Women's participation includes farming, post-harvest processing, marketing, logistics, and entrepreneurship, but is concentrated in lower-income, lower-status roles^{[6][7]}.
- Gender gaps in productivity persist: female-managed farms yield 13–25% less than male-managed farms, depending on the country^{[8][9][10]}.

3. Barriers Facing Women in Agribusiness

3.1 Access to Land and Property

- Only 15% of rural women own land, primarily due to patriarchal inheritance laws and social norms^{[5][11]}.

- Lack of ownership undermines access to credit and discourages investment in modern farming techniques, infrastructure, and equipment.

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