

Analyzing Women's Economic Empowerment in the Agriculture Sector in Hill Areas and its Impacts

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Abstract

The subject of women's economic empowerment in the agriculture sector in hill areas has received considerable attention in recent years, as policymakers and practitioners seek to address the challenges faced by these communities. In particular, the impact of women's economic empowerment on male outmigration in these areas has become an important issue, as male outmigration results in the loss of labor, skills, and resources that are crucial for sustainable development. This study aims to examine the existing research on women's economic empowerment in the agriculture sector in hill areas, with a focus on its impact on male outmigration and existing strategies for sustainable livelihoods. To sum up, the literature review establishes that women's economic empowerment has a positive impact on reducing male outmigration, improving livelihoods, and contributing to sustainable development in rural hill areas. Women's involvement in agriculture, especially in self-help groups, can provide them with access to credit and training, leading to increased agricultural productivity and income. This, in turn, can reduce poverty and dependence on male household members, ultimately curbing male outmigration. The review emphasizes the importance of promoting women's economic empowerment in the agriculture sector to ensure long-term sustainable development and improve livelihoods. Policymakers, stakeholders, and communities must prioritize this issue to foster sustainable development in hill areas.

Introduction

Women's economic empowerment is a vital aspect of the agriculture sector, especially in hill areas, as it can have a profound impact on sustainable livelihoods and male outmigration. The agriculture sector is one of the most important sectors for rural economies, and it plays a significant role in providing food security and reducing poverty. Women constitute a significant part of the agricultural labor force, and their economic empowerment can result in improved livelihoods and reduced poverty, which in turn can help reduce male outmigration. However, despite their crucial role in the agriculture sector, women in hill areas face many challenges that hinder their economic empowerment. These challenges include limited access to credit, education, and training, as well as gender-based discrimination and bias. In recent years, there has been an increased interest in exploring the impact of women's economic empowerment and male outmigration in hill areas. Studies have shown that women's economic empowerment can lead to reduced poverty, improved livelihoods, and reduced incentives for male outmigration. The importance of women's economic empowerment in the agriculture sector has been emphasized in several urban and rural planning studies. For

instance, a study by Kim et al. (2018) found that women's participation in self-help groups and access to credit and training had a positive impact on their economic empowerment and reduced poverty, which in turn reduced the incentives for male outmigration. Another study by Chandra et al. (2020) showed that women's economic empowerment through their involvement in agriculture led to improved livelihoods and reduced poverty, which was found to be a significant factor in reducing male outmigration.

This study aims to provide an overview of the concept of women's economic empowerment in the context of the agriculture sector in hill areas of the Indian Himalayan Region and to analyze its impact on male outmigration and strategies for sustainable livelihoods. The study will explore the various challenges faced by women in the agriculture sector and the strategies that can be implemented to promote their economic empowerment. The study emphasizes the need for strategies to promote women's economic empowerment and addresses the challenges faced by women in the agriculture sector, to support sustainable livelihoods and reduce male outmigration in hill areas.

Methodology

The literature review was based on studies from urban and rural planning journals, which were relevant to the topic of women's economic empowerment in the agriculture sector in hill areas. The studies were selected based on their relevance to their contribution to the understanding of the impact of women's economic empowerment on male outmigration and strategies for sustainable livelihoods in hill areas. The following methodology was adopted to conduct the review of the literature:

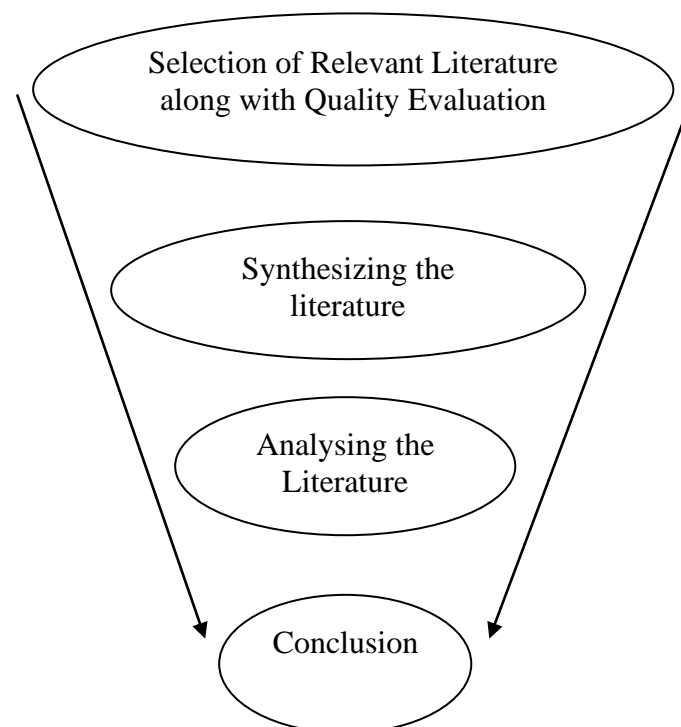


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Selecting relevant literature: The first step was to select relevant literature based on criteria such as relevance to the research topic, publication date, and the methodology used. Only peer-reviewed articles, reports, and other sources that focused on women's economic empowerment in the agriculture sector in hill areas were included.

Evaluating the quality of the literature: The quality of the selected literature was evaluated based on factors such as the methodology used, sample size, the validity of the results, and the level of rigor in the analysis.

Synthesizing the literature: The next step was to synthesize the findings of the selected literature to identify common themes and patterns related to women's economic empowerment and its impact on male outmigration and sustainable livelihoods.

Analyzing the literature: The final step was to analyze the literature to identify key findings in existing knowledge on the topic. This involved comparing and contrasting the findings of the studies and drawing conclusions about the relationships between women's economic empowerment, male outmigration, and sustainable livelihoods in the agriculture sector in hill areas.

Conclusion: The final section will provide a conclusion and discuss the implications of the literature review for planners and policymakers.

This research methodology enabled the researcher to conduct a comprehensive and systematic review of existing literature on women's economic empowerment in the agriculture sector in hill areas and its impact on male outmigration and sustainable livelihoods. The methodology provided a solid foundation for future research on this topic by highlighting major findings and the way forward.

Literature Review

The literature review provides a comprehensive understanding of the impact of women's economic empowerment on male outmigration and the strategies that have been implemented for sustainable livelihoods in hill areas. The structure of the literature review is as follows: the first section provides an overview of the concept of women's economic empowerment and its importance in the context of the agriculture sector. The second section focuses on the impact of women's economic empowerment in the agriculture sector on male outmigration in hill areas. The third section focuses on the strategies for sustainable livelihoods in hill areas in the context of women's economic empowerment in the agriculture sector.

Overview of the concept of women's economic empowerment and its importance in the agriculture sector

Women's economic empowerment refers to the process of enabling women to have control over their own lives and contribute to their economic growth and development. It is a multi-faceted concept that involves improving women's access to resources, such as education,

training, and credit, as well as changing attitudes and perceptions toward women's role in the economy Kabeer (2005). According to Kabeer (2001), women's economic empowerment is achieved when women can participate in economic activities on equal terms with men, have control over their income and assets, and have access to opportunities for economic growth and development.

Women's economic empowerment in the agriculture sector is important for several reasons. Firstly, women make up a significant proportion of the agricultural labor force in many countries, and their economic empowerment can have a positive impact on agricultural productivity and food security. According to FAO (2011), empowering women in agriculture can improve the productivity of small-scale farmers, increase the availability of food, and reduce poverty in rural areas.

Secondly, women's economic empowerment in agriculture can have positive impacts on the broader economy. For example, empowering women in agriculture can increase the number of women entrepreneurs, create new market opportunities, and stimulate economic growth. According to the World Bank (2018), investing in women's economic empowerment in the agriculture sector can help to achieve sustainable economic growth and reduce poverty in rural areas.

Thirdly, women's economic empowerment in agriculture can help to reduce gender inequalities and promote gender equality. According to Kabeer (2001), women's economic empowerment is essential for achieving gender equality, as it gives women greater control over their own lives and helps to break down the barriers that limit their economic opportunities.

Finally, women's economic empowerment in agriculture can contribute to sustainable development. By improving women's access to resources, such as education, training, and credit, women are better equipped to adapt to changing economic and environmental conditions and contribute to sustainable development (World Bank, 2018).

Impact of Women's Economic Empowerment on Male Outmigration

The impact of women's economic empowerment on male outmigration has been the subject of numerous studies in the planning and development literature. In particular, the agriculture sector in hill areas has been identified as a key context for understanding the relationship between women's empowerment and male outmigration. One of the key findings from the literature is that women's economic empowerment can lead to reduced male outmigration by improving the livelihoods and income-generating capacities of households in hill areas. This is supported by a study by Sultana et al. (2021), who found that women's participation in self-help groups (SHGs) in Uttarakhand led to an increase in agricultural productivity and income, which in turn reduced male outmigration. Similarly, a study by Gautam et al. (2018) in the Himalayan region of Nepal found that women's participation in agricultural cooperatives led to an increase in household income and reduced male outmigration. Another important aspect

of women's economic empowerment that has been shown to impact male outmigration is the role of gender-sensitive policies and programs. For example, a study by Karki and Bhandari (2019) in Nepal found that the implementation of gender-sensitive policies and programs in the agriculture sector was associated with a reduction in male outmigration. The authors argue that these policies and programs helped to address gender inequalities in access to resources and decision-making power, which in turn improved the livelihoods and income-generating capacities of women in hill areas. Moreover, the literature also highlights the importance of social and cultural norms in shaping the impact of women's economic empowerment on male outmigration. For example, a study by Dangol and Pandey (2020) in the Hill Region of Nepal found that the traditional division of labor by gender and the persistence of patriarchal norms limited the impact of women's economic empowerment on male outmigration. The authors argue that to effectively reduce male outmigration, it is important to address these underlying social and cultural norms and to empower women at the household and community levels. The impact of women's economic empowerment on male outmigration is influenced by a range of factors, including the context-specific nature of gender inequalities, the availability and implementation of gender-sensitive policies and programs, and the persistence of social and cultural norms.

Strategies for Sustainable Livelihoods

Women's economic empowerment in the agriculture sector has been recognized as a key driver of sustainable livelihoods. The need for sustainable livelihoods is particularly pressing in hill areas where agriculture is the primary source of income for many households.

One strategy that has been documented in the literature is the promotion of women's self-help groups (Kamal, 2018). SHGs are informal groups of women who come together to support each other financially and socially. They provide women with access to credit and training and help them increase their agricultural productivity and income. Through the SHGs, women can purchase better quality inputs, adopt better farming practices, and market their products more effectively. The increase in income and improved livelihoods help reduce male outmigration in these areas (Sultana et al., 2021).

Another strategy for sustainable livelihoods is the promotion of agroforestry (Mehta, 2019). Agroforestry involves the integration of trees into agricultural landscapes. This not only helps to conserve natural resources but also provides farmers with a source of income from the sale of forest products. In hill areas, agroforestry has been particularly successful in empowering women, as they are often the primary collectors and marketers of forest products (Sultana et al., 2021).

In addition to SHGs and agroforestry, the literature has also documented the importance of education and training in promoting sustainable livelihoods (Shah, 2020). Education and training can help women acquire the skills and knowledge they need to effectively participate in the agricultural sector. This includes training in financial management, marketing, and sustainable agricultural practices. By providing women with these skills, they are better

equipped to increase their income and improve their livelihoods, thereby reducing the need for male outmigration (Sultana et al., 2021).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the literature review provides a comprehensive understanding of the impact of women's economic empowerment on male outmigration and sustainable livelihoods in hill areas. The results from various studies highlight the positive impact that women's economic empowerment can have on reducing male outmigration, improving livelihoods, and contributing to sustainable development in rural areas. Women's involvement in agriculture, particularly in self-help groups, can provide them with access to credit and training, which helps to increase their agricultural productivity and income. This increased income and improved livelihoods can reduce poverty and dependence on male household members, thereby reducing the incentives for male outmigration. Moreover, the literature review supports the need for promoting women's economic empowerment in the agriculture sector as a crucial aspect of sustainable development in hill areas. By empowering women through access to financial resources and training opportunities, communities can ensure long-term, sustainable development that benefits everyone. The importance of supporting women's economic empowerment in the agriculture sector cannot be overstated, and policymakers, stakeholders, and communities must prioritize this issue in their efforts to promote sustainable development and improve livelihoods in rural areas.

Future Scope

The study provides a comprehensive understanding of the current state of knowledge on the subject and highlights the significance of women's economic empowerment in promoting sustainable livelihoods in hill areas. The study will be useful for planners who are involved in developing policies and programs aimed at improving the lives of rural communities in hill areas. It will provide them with insights into the role that women's economic empowerment plays in reducing male outmigration and improving livelihoods in these areas.

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