



WOMEN'S ACCESS TO AGRICULTURAL INPUTS AND TOOLS IN THE VILLAGE OF SOURI IN THE COMMUNE OF DÉDOUGOU (BURKINA FASO)

[Étapes de traitement de l'article]

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Yacouba TENGUERI

Daniel Ouezzin Coulibaly University (Burkina Faso)

✉ tengueri@yahoo.fr

Abstract: Women's insecure land tenure makes it difficult for them to contribute to achieving food security in their households, even though they are the backbone of the household. This study examines the structural obstacles to women's access to agricultural resources in the village of Sour, Burkina Faso, considering the interaction between gender, economic constraints and traditional land tenure systems. Despite women's crucial role in household food security, their limited access to productive resources hampers their agricultural productivity and economic autonomy. Using a mixed methods approach combining quantitative surveys (n = 485) and qualitative interviews (n = 12), this research examines the complex dynamics of women's access to agricultural inputs and tools. The study used simple random sampling and statistics analysis using SPSS software, supplemented by thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews. The results indicate significant gender disparities in access to resources: only 6.12% of women have access to their husbands' agricultural tools, while 53.23% rely mainly on traditional hand tools (daba). Although 77.32% of respondents said they had access to chemical and organic fertilizers, qualitative data revealed that the quantities obtained were insufficient for optimal production. Statistics analysis showed a correlation between marital status and access to modern farming tools, with married women showing higher rates of access than single or widowed women.

Keywords: Women, agricultural inputs, agricultural tools, food security, Burkina Faso

ACCÈS DES FEMMES AUX INTRANTS ET OUTILS AGRICOLES DU VILLAGE DE SOURI, COMMUNE DE DÉDOUGOU (BURKINA FASO)

Résumé : La précarité foncière des femmes rend difficile leur contribution à l'atteinte de la sécurité alimentaire dans leur ménage en dépit du fait qu'elles soient l'épine dorsale. Cette présente recherche examine les obstacles structurels à l'accès des femmes aux ressources agricoles dans le village de Sour, au Burkina Faso, en se concentrant sur l'intersection entre le genre, les contraintes économiques et les systèmes fonciers traditionnels. Malgré le rôle crucial des femmes dans la sécurité alimentaire des ménages, leur accès limité aux ressources productives constitue un frein à leur productivité agricole et à leur autonomie économique. À partir d'une approche mixte combinant des enquêtes quantitatives (n=485) et des entretiens qualitatifs (n=12), cette recherche examine la dynamique complexe de l'accès des femmes aux intrants et aux outils agricoles. L'étude a utilisé un échantillonnage aléatoire simple et a effectué des analyses statistiques à l'aide du logiciel SPSS, complétées par une analyse thématique d'entretiens semi-structurés. Les résultats

indiquent d'importantes disparités entre les sexes dans l'accès aux ressources : seulement 6,12 % des femmes ont accès aux outils agricoles de leur mari, tandis que 53,23 % dépendent principalement des outils manuels traditionnels (daba). Bien que 77,32 % des répondantes aient déclaré avoir accès aux engrais chimiques et organiques, les données qualitatives ont révélé que les quantités obtenues étaient insuffisantes pour une production optimale. L'analyse statistique a démontré une corrélation entre le statut matrimonial et l'accès aux outils agricoles modernes, les femmes mariées affichant des taux d'accès plus élevés que les répondantes célibataires ou veuves.

Mots clés : Femmes, intrants agricoles, outils agricoles, sécurité alimentaire, Burkina Faso

Introduction

In sub-Saharan Africa, agriculture remains one of the main means of livelihood, particularly for women. In Burkina Faso, women account for 75% of subsistence production (PNG, 2009). However, despite their active participation in this sector, women continue to face considerable obstacles to accessing agricultural land (Tengueri Y., 2016, 2019, 2023) due to population growth, urban and village sprawl, land grabbing by property developers (Monique B. & Bérénice B., 2022), the monetarization of land (Djiré M., 2007), climate change (Buijsrogge P., 1989; Sodter F., 2003; Doka M. and Monimart M., 2004), and so on. According to Djiré M. (2007), in such a context, the first victims of the scarcity of farmland are women. They farm on "loaned" portions of land of dubious quality (Monimart M., 1989; Volker S., 1998). Furthermore, a study by Traoré S. (2010) in Bondoukuy revealed that, unlike women in Bonborokuy, the bwaba women of Bondoukuy are strictly forbidden to invest in the purchase of land, work oxen and farming equipment (Tengueri Y., 2012). Thus, they are excluded from land rights because they are perceived by members of their community and by the community of their husbands as outsiders. For most of these communities, these are strategies to prevent family or community land assets from being monopolized by another family or even another community.

They generally benefit from poor agricultural land requiring a high input of nutrients (Ouédraogo V. M., et Al, 2012). However, they will organize their farming activities according to those of the man. This heavy reliance on women's agricultural activities in the family field (Boserup E., 1970) limits their ability to maximize their productivity and improve their economic well-being. They also have limited access to essential resources such "as quality" seeds, fertilizers and modern technologies. The adoption of these new technologies has been more favorable to men than to women. This calls into question the idea that the household is a unit of converging interests. Indeed, within each socio-economic category, the effects of technological change vary according to gender (Agarwal A., 2001). Rural women's access to agricultural tools and inputs is a crucial issue in the context of climate change and the eradication of poverty in rural areas. Their access to inputs could increase agricultural production in Africa



by 20% (COFD)¹⁶. However, compliance with standards for the use of these organic or chemical minerals in the fields is recommended, as it has a positive effect on yields and helps combat food insecurity. However, they note that the use of agricultural inputs remains dependent on its availability on the market but also its affordability (price variations, high prices and poor quality of fertilizers) by poor farmers (Niyonkuru D., 2018) and even more so vulnerable categories such as women. These factors mean that the situation of women in agriculture remains difficult, despite the fact that they are the backbone of agriculture in the area (Harison P., 1991; Meillassoux C., 1991). Cultural and political context, as well as socio-economic factors such as gender, household composition, age and distribution of assets. This article seeks to answer the following question: Under what conditions do women in Souri access agricultural inputs and tools?

The article's main objective is to determine the conditions under which women in Souri have access to agricultural inputs and tools. We hypothesise that socio-cultural factors hinder Souri women's access to agricultural inputs and tools. New agricultural technologies remain the prerogative of men with the household's economic resources.

1. Methodology

1.1. *Presentation of the study area*

The village of Souri is situated 10 km from the town of Dédougou, which is the regional capital of the Boucle du Mouhoun region. The site is located in the north-western part of Burkina Faso. In accordance with Law No. 055-2004 on the General Code for Local Authorities (CGCT), the village of Souri, which has a population of 4,056, falls within the territorial jurisdiction of the town of Dédougou (DGUTF, 2012). The demographic composition of the village is predominantly constituted by the Bwaba (indigenous people) and the Moosé.

1.2. *Study population*

The survey population consists mainly of rural women from the village of Souri. The women's husbands, customary authorities, agricultural agents were also included in the study population.

1.3. *Methods*

To understand the access of women in Souri to agricultural tools and inputs, a mixed method approach combining both the questionnaire and the interview guide was implemented to capture the reality of agricultural production.

1.4. *Data collection tools and techniques*

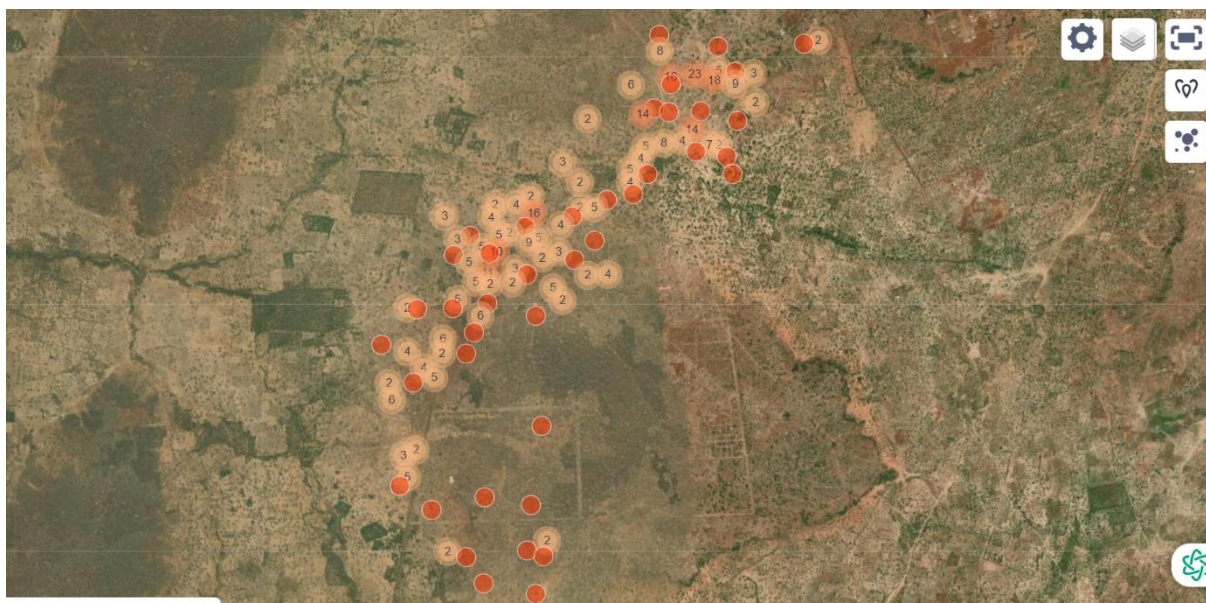
The questionnaire and the interview guide were the data collection tools. The questionnaire was developed on the kobo platform collect tools box and administered

¹⁶https://aqoci.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/fiche_technique_autonomisation_economique_cdp_aqoci_sept_2014.pdf

to women in households in Souri. For the qualitative component, we conducted semi-directed interviews with husbands, customary authorities and agricultural agents.

1.5. *Sampling and sample*

Figure 1: Distribution of households surveyed in Souri



Source: Google Maps , July 2024

Quantitative sampling was simple random and the main criterion for inclusion of women was their access to agricultural land during the survey period. We administered 485 questionnaires to women.

Qualitative sampling was reasoned with the main inclusion criterion of having relevant information on the subject. To this end, we conducted 10 interviews with spouses, 1 interview with a customary authority and an agricultural agent.

Overall, a sample of 497 individuals was surveyed during two weeks of data collection.

1.6. *Data analysis*

Data collected using the Kobo platform Tool Box were extracted to an Xls (Excel) file. The file was exported to SPSS software for processing. As for the qualitative data, the notes taken on the field notebook were entered into Microsoft Word 2016 and manually analyzed.



2. Results

2.1. Sociodemographic characteristics

Table 1: Distribution of rural women according to their marital status

MARITAL STATUS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE (%)
BRIDE	386	79,59
BACHELOR	40	8,25
WIDOW	38	7,84
COHABITATION	21	4,32
Total	485	100,00

Source: field survey February 2024

Interpretation of the socio-demographic data shows that 79.59% ($n = 386$) of the respondents were married, 8.25% ($n = 40$) single, 7.84% ($n = 38$) widowed and 4.32% ($n = 21$) cohabiting. The mean age of the respondents was 42.3 years ($SD = 11.2$), with a range of 18 to 75 years. The level of education was particularly low, with 73.2% reporting no formal education.

2.2. Women's access to agricultural tools

Table 2: Distribution of responses to the question "Do you have access to agricultural tools?"

ANSWER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
YES	463	95.46
NO	21	4.33
NO ANSWER	1	0.21
Total	485	100.00

Source: field survey February 2024

These data show that the vast majority of women surveyed (95.46%) have access to agricultural tools, while a small proportion (4.33%) do not. 0.21% or one woman did not answer this question.

The agricultural tools that women in the village of Souri have access to taking into account also their ability to rent certain tools such as tractors, harvesters and seeders, are distributed as follows:

Table 3: Tools accessible to women

AGRICULTURAL TOOLS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
DABA	453	53.23
PLOW	247	29.02
SEEDER	49	5.76
PICKAXE	38	4.47
MACHETE	31	3.64
TRACTOR	25	2.94
COMBINE	3	0.35
PUMP	2	0.24
HOE	1	0.12
CUTTER	1	0.12
AX	1	0.12
TOTAL	851	100.00

Source : field survey February 2024

The results provided by respondents on agricultural tools reveal that the daba is the manual agricultural tool most used by women, at 53.23%. This indicates a strong reliance on traditional, simple and accessible tools. The plough (29.02%), the seed drill (5.76%), the pickaxe (4.47%), the machete (3.64%), the hoe (0.12%), the cutter (0.12%), the axe (0.12%), are also manual agricultural tools and show a diversity of traditional tools used, but at varying levels.

However, there is low use of motorised tools by women, such as tractors (2.94%), harvesters (0.35%) and pumps (0.24%). The low percentage of tractor use highlights the limitations of access to more advanced, motorised technologies. The reasons for this are linked to the high rental costs, which reinforces the idea of economic gender inequality in terms of access to these modern tools. Women's economic insecurity and socio-cultural factors in the village of Souri also hinder their access to these modern tools to increase their productivity. In reality, socio-cultural constraints mean that spending is done under the instructions of the head of household. The man has the final say on spending, even if the money comes from the woman's efforts. Cultural constraints are deeply rooted in the traditional patriarchal structures that govern the



allocation of resources. K,T, married, February 2024: "Access to tools depends entirely on my husband's will. Even when I have money from selling groundnuts, I have to ask his permission to buy or hire equipment".

Add to this the words of an official from the regional directorate of agriculture:

"Traditional beliefs limit women's access to certain tools, particularly modern tools such as tractors and mechanical seed drills. These are considered to be the domain of men, and women who try to access them often face social stigmatisation".

On the other hand, for some of the husbands of the women interviewed, the small size of the women's farms does not require the use of modern tools because the most important work for the household is farming in the family field, as emphasised by the head of the family, K.S (male, bwaba, polygamous):

"These days, things are getting expensive, and we can't afford to use agricultural tools for women's work. They can get by with the daba. They can plough everything in a day if they take their work seriously. They farm to produce groundnuts and so on. But it's the men's field that gives everyone enough to eat.

This perception of the smallness of women's farms reflects not only an underestimation of their contribution to the domestic economy, but also an imbalance in the distribution of agricultural resources within households. By limiting women's access to modern tools, husbands maintain a status quo that hinders the optimisation of the small farms managed by women. This lack of structural support helps to perpetuate economic inequality between the sexes in rural communities.

2.3. Modalities of access for women to agricultural tools

Table 4: Women's mode of access to agricultural tools

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
PURCHASE	372	66.55
DON	98	17.53
RENTAL	42	7.51
READY	37	6.62
OTHER TO BE SPECIFIED	10	1.79
TOTAL	559	100.00

Source : field survey February 2024

The results highlight the ways in which rural women in the village of Souri access agricultural tools. The majority of women (66.55%) gained access to agricultural tools through purchase. This indicates that purchase is the preferred method of acquisition, probably because it offers direct control and immediate availability of the tools needed for field work. The daba, the machete and the cutter are tools that are most often accessible to their pockets. On the local market, the price varies between 1,000 CFA

francs and 3,000 CFA francs, depending on the type of daba. A significant percentage (17.53%) of the tools are obtained through donations.

A small group (7.51%) rent tools. This is a flexible solution for women who cannot afford to buy tools. However, the low rate of access indicates accessibility problems and the limited availability of rental services in the village. The rental price is beyond the financial capacity of the village women. The daily rental of a tractor costs 25,000 CFA francs, and farm workers are paid 1,000 to 2,000 CFA francs a day. Indeed, one respondent underlined these market constraints in the following terms: *"The cost of modern tools is restrictive. Renting a tractor costs 25,000 CFA francs a day, which represents almost a month's income from my vegetable sales"* (Interview with T, S, bride, February 2024).

Access to tools by loan (6.62%) reveals social networks and solidarity within the community. Women borrow tools from each other, which may indicate social cohesion and mutual support in a context of strong individualization and active solidarity between community members. A very small percentage (1.79%) of women use other methods to access agricultural tools. These methods could include exchanges or other innovative local solutions. The archaic, fragile and inappropriate tools used by the women of Souri represent a significant obstacle to productive and sustainable agriculture.

2. Women's accessibility to agricultural inputs

Table 5: Access to agricultural inputs

VALUE	STAFF	FREQUENCY
YES	375	77.32
NO	87	17.94
NO ANSWER	23	4.74
TOTAL	485	100.00

Source: field survey February 2024

A large majority of the women surveyed (77.32%) have access to agricultural inputs such as fertilizer and organic manure. A significant proportion of the women surveyed, 17.94%, do not have access to agricultural inputs. This suggests that there are still obstacles to overcome to ensure equitable access to agricultural inputs for all women. 4.74% of the women surveyed did not answer this question. In summary, the data shows significant progress in women's access to agricultural inputs, but also the need to continue efforts to achieve full and equitable inclusion.

Table 6: Type of input used by women on their farms

VALUE	STAFF	FREQUENCY
CHEMICAL	2 00	53.20



ORGANIC	175	46.80
TOTAL	375	100.00

Source: field survey February 2024

The majority of women (53.2%) use chemical inputs for their farming activities. This can be explained by the accessibility of chemical products on the local market and also in the stock obtained by the head of household. However, for her, the use of these chemical fertilizers is justified by their positive effect on agricultural yields. Almost half of the women (46.8%) use organic inputs. This shows a significant adoption of sustainable and environmentally friendly farming practices. The use of organic inputs is linked to factors such as the availability and cost of inputs.

In summary, the data suggest significant use of both types of input, with a slight predominance of chemical inputs, and indicate a trend towards more sustainable farming practices among women.

Table 7: Expenditure on the purchase of chemical inputs

	EXPENSES	STAFF	PERCENTAGE
MINIMUM	0	123	25.36
AVERAGE	30000	296	61.03
MAXIMUM	150000	66	13.61
TOTAL		485	100.00

Source: field survey February 2024

A quarter of the women surveyed (25.36%) had not spent any money on their farms in 2023. There are a number of reasons for this, such as the use of available natural resources, the use of some of the inputs bought by their spouse, or financial constraints that prevent any spending. The majority of the women surveyed, 61.03%, spent an average of 30,000 CFA francs on inputs such as chemical fertiliser for their farms. This represents a modest investment given their low financial capacity. They buy a bag of NPK and subsidised urea at 12500 fr/50kg each. On the local market, the price of 50kg of urea is 26,500 CFA francs and NPK 15 15 15 at 28,750 CFA francs¹⁷.

A minority (just over 13%) of women spent up to 150,000 CFA francs. These high levels of expenditure indicate larger farms, investment in expensive technology or equipment, or moves into specialised and potentially more profitable crops.

Table 8: Satisfaction with the quantity of agricultural inputs used for agricultural production

VALUE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NO	315	64.95%
YES	97	20.00%

¹⁷ https://agridigitale.net/article/voici_les_prix_du_npk_ure_dans_l_uemoa_

NO ANSWER	73	15.05%
TOTAL	485	100.00%

Source: field survey February 2024

A significant majority of women, 64.95%, are not satisfied with the quantity of inputs used in agricultural production. Indeed, for these women surveyed, the available inputs do not adequately meet the needs of the crops, which leads to yields lower than expected. The explanatory factors are mainly linked to financial constraints, limited access to inputs and inadequate distribution of household resources.

A minority of women, 20%, are satisfied with the quantity of inputs used. This indicates that for these women the inputs available are proportional to their needs to obtain a good agricultural yield.

Despite their access to agricultural inputs and tools, quantitative and qualitative data show that the vast majority remain dissatisfied with the yields obtained.

2.4. Support for women in field work

Table 9: Assistance in women's farms

Value	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
CHILDREN	268	40.54
HUSBAND	207	31.32
NO HELP	83	12.56
OTHER TO BE SPECIFIED	103	15.58
TOTAL	661	100.00

Source: field survey February 2024

More than half of women (40.54%) are helped by their children in agricultural work. This highlights the crucial role of children in family agricultural activities. A significant proportion of women (31.32%) receive help from their husbands, which shows some cooperation within the household for agricultural activities. Nearly 12.58% of women do not receive any assistance to work in the field, which may indicate a heavier workload and increased challenges for these women. The lack of assistance may make these women more vulnerable to agricultural difficulties and reduce their ability to manage periods of high demand for work in the family field. 15.58% of women receive help from other unspecified sources, which could include extended family members, friends, neighbors or seasonal workers. From the qualitative survey, it emerges that women in Souri depend largely on the help of their children and husbands for



agricultural work, with significant but diversified community support (women's groups, youth groups, songsongtaaba community groups, etc.). However, a significant proportion of women have no help at all, which makes them particularly vulnerable. However, 86.72% of women are dissatisfied with the yields obtained from their farms. For them, this low yield is linked

3. Discussion

The analysis of field data reveals persistent inequalities in women's access to modern agricultural tools and fertilizers in Souri village. The majority of women surveyed (95.46%) reported having access to agricultural tools, however these tools are mainly manual and traditional, such as the daba (53.23%) and the plow (29.02%), while access to motorized tools, such as tractors (2.94%), remains very limited (Table 3). This dependence on traditional tools reflects women's economic precariousness, which constitutes a barrier to their access to modern agricultural technologies. These findings are consistent with those of other studies conducted in sub-Saharan Africa, where access to modern agricultural technologies for women is often limited due to economic and socio-cultural factors. According to Doss R C., (2001), rural women tend to use manual agricultural tools because of their affordability, while access to modern equipment is generally reserved for men, who have greater economic and social power. Furthermore, Quisumbing A. and Pandolfelli L. (2010) confirm that women's limited access to productive resources, including modern agricultural tools, hinders their ability to increase their productivity.

Regarding access to agricultural inputs, the data show that 77.32% of women have access to fertilizers (Table 5), with a slight predominance for the use of chemical fertilizers (53.2%) compared to organic fertilizers (46.8%) (Table 6). These results reflect some progress in the use of modern inputs, but they hide significant inequalities. Indeed, a significant proportion of women (64.95%) say they are dissatisfied with the amount of fertilizer used (Table 8), which highlights that despite access to fertilizers, their use remains insufficient to meet agricultural production needs. Previous studies corroborate these results. For example, Kinkingninhoun-Médagbé F. and *al.* (2010) showed that even if women have access to agricultural inputs, the quantities available and their quality are not always sufficient to allow optimal production. Furthermore, Pouya B. M., and *Al* (2013) highlight that the dosages of fertilizers used by women are disproportionate to the area planted but also to the combination of the two types of fertilizers on farms. However, the combination of these two types of fertilizers increases the yield of agricultural areas more than the use of a single type of fertilizer. In addition, a study conducted by Meinzen -Dick R. and *al.* (2011) highlights that women face financial constraints that limit their ability to purchase sufficient quantities of fertilizers, particularly in subsistence farming systems. However, contrary to some studies that show a total lack of access to fertilizers for women in other rural areas (FAO, 2011), field data reveal an improvement in access to fertilizers

in Souri, although additional efforts are needed to ensure equitable access and optimal use of agricultural inputs.

The results also show that purchase remains the primary mode of access to agricultural tools (66.55%, Table 4), although alternative mechanisms, such as donations (17.53%) and rental (7.51%), are also used. The reliance on purchase reflects a preference for direct ownership of tools, but rental, although a viable option, remains underused, probably due to high costs. This is consistent with the findings of the Farnworth study Cathy R. and Colverson C. E., (2015), who points out that rural women favour the ownership of affordable hand tools, while renting modern agricultural machinery is often financially inaccessible.

From the analysis of the results, we can conclude that the valorization of agricultural work in the family field highlights that access to resources is oriented towards activities perceived as directly profitable for the household as a whole. This vision leaves aside the autonomous activities of women, considered secondary, while they play a crucial role in food security and the diversification of sources of income. In addition, the concentration on large family plots to the detriment of women's small farms deprives them of the opportunity to develop their own production capacity, thus limiting their economic independence and their contribution to the local economy. Thus, this situation reveals a gender dynamic where the role of women in agriculture is undervalued, leading to structural marginalization in access to essential resources. This marginalization has long-term repercussions, particularly on the economic emancipation of women and on the food security of households and communities as a whole.

Conclusion

Women's limited access to new technologies for their farms is a manifestation of deeply rooted gender inequalities in socio-economic structures in Souri village. Men's perceptions that women's small farms are not worthy of advanced technical resources maintain an imbalance that hinders the optimization of women's agricultural productivity. Yet, studies show that even small plots of land can contribute significantly to food security and the household economy when women have the necessary inputs. By neglecting these opportunities, current dynamics perpetuate women's economic dependency and reduce their capacity for empowerment. To address this situation, it is essential to rethink agricultural policies and promote equitable distribution of resources, which would enhance women's contributions to local agriculture and strengthen their resilience to economic and climate challenges.



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