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Women Empowerment in Agriculture: Status, Levels and Determinants among Rural Households in Kenya

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Abstract

The unexploited potential of women and girls is rapidly gaining attention in Kenya and around the world. Strategies to unlock this potential are seen as major strides towards an all-inclusive and sustainable socio-economic growth. Even though considerable efforts have been made to expedite gender mainstreaming with the aim of empowering women and girls to effectively contribute to development within their spheres of influence and realize their full potential, the process faces a myriad of huddles especially in Africa. In Kenya, women perform the majority of agricultural functions and empowering them is key to food security in the country. Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI); a survey-based index designed to measure the empowerment, agency, and inclusion of women in the agricultural sector has been employed in this study to assess the state of women empowerment and gender parity in agriculture in Kenya. Results show that although gains have been made in women empowerment in agriculture in Kenya, the gender parity gap is still wide at 16.7 percent. The key contributors to disempowerment for women include workload, access to and decisions on credit, group membership and control over use of income. The study also finds that gender, age, relation to primary decision maker, education, household type, income and location are key factors that influence various aspects of women empowerment in agriculture. Socio-cultural gender biases that negate gender equality and women empowerment efforts made in Kenya should be closely monitored and regulated.

For further assistance, more information or if you would like to conduct interviews with the Lead Principal Investigator, you can do so through: Judy Kimani, 0720 96 33 48, (jkimani@tegemeo.org).