



Microfinance's Role in Promoting Gender Equity within Commercial Agriculture in Democratic Republic of Congo (1980s-2000s)

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Abstract

Microfinance has been adopted by various countries as a tool to address economic disparities, particularly in commercial agriculture where women often face barriers to accessing capital. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected through interviews with farmers, focus group discussions, and analysis of financial records. The study employed a mixed-method approach to ensure comprehensive insights into microfinance's impact on gender dynamics in DRC's agricultural economy. Microfinance initiatives demonstrated significant support for women in terms of crop diversification and income generation, particularly among small-scale farmers who were previously underrepresented in traditional banking systems. Women reported an average increase of 25% in their crop yields following microloan interventions. The findings suggest that microfinance programmes can play a pivotal role in enhancing gender equity within the agricultural sector by providing financial resources and empowering women through education and training. Microfinance organizations should continue to tailor their services to meet the specific needs of female farmers, emphasising inclusive practices and engaging with community leaders. Policy makers are encouraged to develop supportive frameworks that promote equal access to microfinance for all genders in DRC's agricultural sector. microfinance, gender equity, commercial agriculture, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), mixed-methods research

Keywords: Congo, Microfinance, Gender Equity, Empowerment, Participatory Research, Development Studies, Community-Based Approaches

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