



Microfinance and Women's Entrepreneurship in Senegalese Rural Areas: An Insight into Programme Impacts

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Abstract

Microfinance programmes have been introduced in various countries to support women entrepreneurs in rural areas, aiming to improve economic opportunities and empower communities. In Senegal, these initiatives are particularly prevalent as a means of fostering local development. A mixed-methods approach was employed, involving a quantitative survey followed by qualitative interviews with participants from selected microfinance projects in different regions of Senegal. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and semi-structured discussions to gather comprehensive insights into the programme's effects on women entrepreneurs. The findings indicate that while microfinance programmes have significantly increased access to financial resources for participating women, there is a need for enhanced support in terms of business skills training and market linkages. Participants highlighted challenges such as inconsistent funding and limited access to markets as major barriers to sustained success. Microfinance programmes show promise in empowering Senegalese rural women entrepreneurs but require tailored interventions to address specific needs and obstacles they face. Future research should focus on developing more targeted support strategies, including enhanced business training modules and improved market facilitation mechanisms. Policy recommendations include advocating for greater financial stability from microfinance providers and promoting regional partnerships that enhance market opportunities for women entrepreneurs.

Keywords: *African Geography, Microfinance, Empowerment Studies, Rural Development, Gender Analysis, Quantitative Research, Qualitative Inquiry*

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