



GENDER DYNAMICS IN FOOD TRADE

BY GRACE MIJIGA MHANGO

AFRICAN WOMEN IN AGRIBUSINESS

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WHO IS AWAB

- ▶ AWAB is the African Women in Agribusiness Network under the Graca Machel Trust with a footprint in 10 countries: Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique, DRC Congo and Ethiopia
- ▶ AWABs mission is to be an efficient and effective network of women in Agribusiness unlocking and unpacking business opportunities for wealth creation
- ▶ AWAB works to facilitate inclusive and innovative agribusiness models with social entrepreneurship at heart, so to achieve social-economic development of women in agribusiness sector in Africa.

Why Gender?

Data Show:

- ▶ 70% of the informal Traders in Africa are women.
- ▶ In Malawi today women and youth account to up to a third of all businesses operating in the informal economy countrywide.
- ▶ 60% of the population are women
- ▶ 70% food producers in Malawi and Highest food producers in Africa are women.
- ▶ Women contribute between 60 to 80% of Agriculture labour

Yet they are limited to:

- ▶ 1% access to formal Financial(meaning banks etc)
- ▶ access to reliable markets

Challenges

Market:

- ▶ Lack of guaranteed markets. The Production to market approach as opposed to market driven approach. Malawi food production system is not working to the producers advantage who mostly are women. Any market failure affects women more than other gender groups.
- ▶ Lack of market infrastructure both soft (market information/data) as well as market infrastructure (storage, roads)
- ▶ Lack of Market policies and regulations, (specifically deliberate market policies that would create a conducive environment for women to tap the local and international market e.g. develop a 30% market for women on all food products noting that the biggest buyer for most of the food products are Governments)

Challenges

Policies:

- ▶ Adhock policy intervention; Issue of import and export ban. This triggers informal trade and often a time contributes to informal exports where Women do not participate. This action limits women access to markets and loss of decent income.
- ▶ Polices that do not talk to each other: One hand promoting exports while the other hand effects export ban (export oriented country versas export ban)
- ▶ Price : Women are often price takers due to their absence on the end market and due to limited access to market information.

Challenges

Finance:

- ▶ Limited access to developmental funds. Mostly women are used as conduits to tap developmental funds, rarely do women benefit especially at the market angle) a lot of funds for storage facilities, to date No woman has had a chance to tap on these funds yet they are the worst victims of post harvest loss
- ▶ No access to agricultural funds
- ▶ Limited access to Commercial Bank Finnces

Challenges

Farm Mechanization

- ▶ To-date mostly using the royal Hoe which is hard labour and contributes to low reduced harvest.
- ▶ Limited access to irrigation equipment and facilities, This limits their production circle to rain fed productions which is currently challenged due to climate change.
- ▶ Furthermore It limits them to single income per annum which cannot sustain the required income for survival per annum.
- ▶ Interm of working hours this limits them to 64 productive working hours per annum as the rest of the work they do does not generate any income(reference to household activities e.g. fetching wood, taking care of family, cooking etc)

Challenges

- ▶ Cohesion and Unity. Women lack cohesion and unity and do not speak with one voice and easily break up in other words lack of teamworking spirit.
- ▶ Quality and standards: due to limited access to quality seed , most of the food produced is compromised on quality and standards which makes their products not competitive especially on the international market.
- ▶ Lack Political will to put women at the center stage of food trade activities or implement some tailor made programmes for advancement of women .eg: MDGS1 and 11, CADAAP etc

Opportunities

- ▶ Growing Population across the World
- ▶ Growing Food and Nutrition demand at both in Malawi, Africa Region Level as well as Globally. This calls for increased value addition which will create investment opportunities and in return increase and sustainable income to the women.
- ▶ Existence of regional markets
- ▶ Existence of social media for information
- ▶ Existence of electronic markets
- ▶ Existence of harmonized policies e.g: Seed Harmonization policies(broaden the market base)
- ▶ Climate Change(providing huge markets for food items e.g. soya)