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“WOMEN IN COFFEE FARMING”

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Abstract: An essay has been developed on the situation of women's problems in coffee growing, which seeks to give a vision of the literature and general trends. The study focuses on concepts such as gender empowerment, equality and gender equity. The descriptive methodology used focused on tracking the diverse newspaper and statistical material found in search engines, managing to identify future lines of work.

The findings range from equal opportunities, economic income, land ownership, to the conclusion that the situation of women in coffee growing is unequal and that there are various barriers that they must face. A series of recommendations are made to improve your situation.

The essay shows the importance of understanding and addressing the situation of women in coffee farming to improve their empowerment and reduce poverty in rural communities.

Keywords: coffee growing, women, empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) highlighted how women's participation in agriculture varies globally, representing between 20% (Latin America) and 50% (Asia and sub-Saharan Africa) of the agricultural workforce, but only among 10% and 20% own land globally (FAO, 2020). In addition, it is noted that women face multiple challenges, including lack of income, land, assets, access to credit and market information, as well as limitations in access to agricultural inputs and training and leadership opportunities.

Montagnon (2017) highlights that this gender gap is due to prejudices rooted in society. However, it is noted that the coffee industry has a significant impact on agriculture, with up to 100 million producers depending on coffee for their livelihood (Casanovas, 2022).

The opportunity to reduce this gender gap in the coffee value chain is highlighted to benefit the specialty coffee supply and suppliers. A positive change is highlighted with more women involved in importing, roasting and as baristas (McCarthy, 2016).

The case of women coffee growers in Colombia, according to the SCAA Sustainability Council (2016), shows that 70% of the workforce in coffee cultivation are women, but only 25% of coffee farms worldwide are managed by women. The challenges faced by these women are highlighted, including limited access to land, education, finance and market networks, as well as gender biases (FAO, 2020).

Gender inequality in the coffee value chain is a global problem. Women face difficulties in representation in leadership roles, access to land, financial resources, market networks and training opportunities, reflecting the need for actions to balance these disparities.

The analysis of the situation of women in the agricultural sector reveals the importance of the economic empowerment of women in agriculture and the challenges they face, as well as the policies and programs implemented to improve their conditions. The need to understand concepts such as gender empowerment, gender equity and equality is highlighted, fundamental to addressing the general problem.

The methodological approach was based on an interpretation of various sources and texts, using a descriptive methodology to provide an overview of the available literature on the topic, although without an exhaustive analysis. The findings are structured into chapters that address equal opportunities, economic income, land ownership, and the barriers that women face in agriculture.

It concludes by highlighting the inequality in the situation of women in this sector, despite its importance, identifying various

barriers that hinder their full participation. Finally, recommendations are proposed to improve its situation in agriculture, especially in coffee cultivation.

CONCEPTUALIZATION

Gender empowerment is crucial to achieving equality in the coffee industry, where women represent around 25% of the workforce in coffee production (ICO, 2021). Despite its presence, it faces multiple barriers, such as exclusion from decisions and limited access to resources according to an ICO study in 2018. These limitations are related to traditional gender roles that lead to a disproportionate burden of domestic work and limit their participation in public spaces, according to Habib Sultan & Hamamah Yahaya (2018) and Accerenzi and Duque (2023)

Gender norms limit their influence on important decisions (OECD, 2017). Women's empowerment seeks to close the inequality gap to allow their full participation in society (Adam & Njogu, 2023). The coffee sector, with a massive consumption of 165 million cups a day globally (Deugd, s.f.), represents an opportunity to improve the position of women through responsible business practices in supply chains and thus improve their living conditions. Every cup of coffee counts in advancing women's empowerment in the field.

Gender equity is essential for sustainability in coffee growing (Cardona Torres, 2018). Despite the efforts, the social and economic marginalization of women in the coffee industry persists, reflected in the lack of appreciation of their work and limited access to productive resources (High Presidential Council for Women's Equality, 2018).

This gender gap in agriculture, according to SVN (2017), limits women's full contribution to economic and social development due to the lack of equity in land and resource ownership.

Discrimination and cultural barriers also negatively affect their participation in the coffee supply chain (ICO, 2018).

Gender equality implies the liberation of stereotypes and discrimination (Hmsadmin, 2022; Yepes Lugo, 2017). Women's empowerment and gender equality are paths towards this equality (ECLAC, 2021). Raising awareness in coffee-growing families about women's contributions and their right to receive equitable benefits (Yepes Lugo, 2017) can increase their negotiation capacity, according to Viaño (2022).

The World Bank estimates that closing the gender gap in agriculture could increase production by 2.5% to 4%, generating increases in agricultural production of up to \$4 billion in some developing countries (Stuart et al, 2018). Furthermore, households led by women in coffee production have 23% more income than those led by men not involved in this production, according to a CIAT study (CIM, 2017).

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

The participation of women in coffee growing is increasingly notable, representing more than 60% of coffee production worldwide along with men (Anacafé, 2023). At an economic level, its formal incorporation could generate a significant contribution to global GDP, estimated at \$10 trillion annually, according to the Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC, 2021). It is expected that by 2025, this contribution will reach an additional \$28 trillion to global GDP (Flores-Carretero, s.f.).

In the coffee industry, women play a crucial role at all stages, from agronomic decisions to marketing, occupying roles as mill owners, managers, baristas, cuppers and entrepreneurs in coffee shops and roasters. Despite representing one in three coffee

growers, women's participation in coffee union leadership is 15%, half of their representation in the industry (Solidaridad, 2022; National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia, 2023). This discrepancy reflects the historical lack of visibility and recognition of women in the coffee industry.

ABOUT HOW AND WHY

The methodology used was descriptive and consisted of searching in different search engines recognized in the academic field, such as JSTOR, ResearchGate, IDEAS, Redalyc, Scielo, Dialnet and World Bank Open Knowledge Repository. Relevant keywords were used, such as “women”, “Coffee farming”, “coffee industry”, “gender” and “women's inequality”, and a time limit was set from 2015 to obtain recent and relevant publications. The importance of keywords lies in the fact that they are terms that identify specific concepts or topics that are sought in research. In this case, the selected keywords allowed us to focus the search on the condition of women in coffee growing, and particularly in Latin America, which allowed us to obtain more precise and relevant results.

It focused on describing the number and type of publications found in the selected search engines, in relation to the specified keywords. That is, it was a detailed review of the results obtained in the search. This methodology is useful to obtain an overview of the available literature on a given topic and to identify general trends in the field of study.

A matrix was created that allowed the data found to be organized, visualized and recorded. The total number of documents, the total number of articles, the total number of books, the total number of reports, the total number of other publications, and the total number of publications per search engine were recorded. Furthermore, articles referring to the condition of women in coffee growing in

Latin America were discriminated from those focused on Africa and/or Asia. The findings obtained allow us to have a clear vision of the quantity and quality of publications on the condition of women in coffee growing in Latin America.

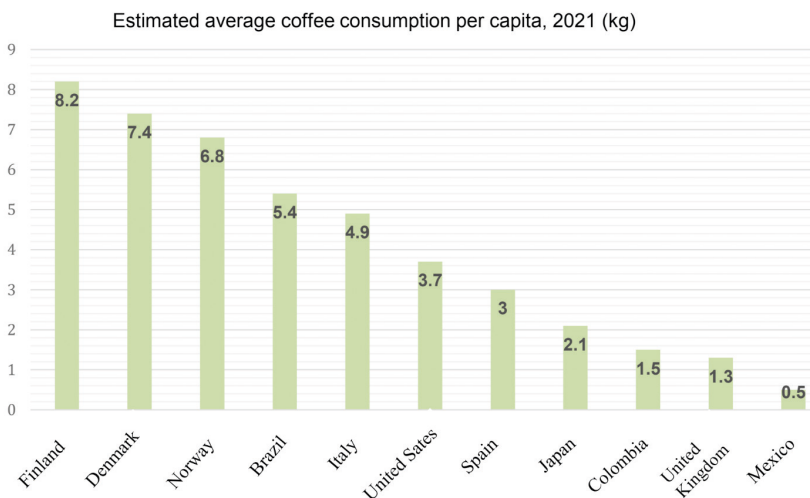
The findings suggest that there is a significant number of documents related to the condition of women in coffee growing in Latin America, but the number of publications focused on Africa and/or Asia is significantly lower. This highlights the need for further research and attention to this topic in these regions.

The methodology allowed for an exhaustive and organized search in different search engines, which allowed obtaining relevant and useful results on the topic of the status of women in coffee growing in Latin America and Africa and/or Asia. The matrix provides a clear overview of the results and may be useful for future research on this topic.

A case study is also included, based on the social network analysis (SNA) methodology and is based on the analysis of the relationships between the actors participating in a social network. In the specific case of the study on the participation of women in the coffee production chain, the ARS was used to identify the relationships between the different actors involved in the “Women of Coffee” program of the National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia.

The ARS is an important tool within the topic of the condition of women in coffee growing, since it allows us to analyze the power relations and gender dynamics present in the coffee production chain. In addition, through the ARS, support and collaboration networks between actors can be identified, which can be useful for the design of policies and programs that promote gender equity in the coffee industry.

Social network analysis is a methodology



Graph 1: Coffee consumption per capita, 2021

Source: Own elaboration based on ICO data

Search Engine	Total number of documents	Total number of items	Total number of books	Total number of reports	Total number of other posts	Total publications focused on the condition of women in coffee growing in Latin America	Total publications focused on the condition of women in coffee growing in Africa and/or Asia
JSTOR	124	56	24	18	26	7	3
ResearchGate	323	244	32	27	20	10	5
IDEAS	237	178	42	11	6	14	8
Redalyc	65	42	10	8	5	2	0
Scielo	112	78	16	10	8	4	2
Dialnet	87	62	13	9	3	3	1
World Bank Open Knowledge Repository	46	32	4	8	2	1	1

Table 2: Search matrix for Women in Coffee Agriculture, as of 2015

Source: self made

Region / Country	Percentage manpower	Percentage of farm heads/landowners	Source
	Sector agrícola		
World	43%	n/a	(FAO, 2020)
Latin America	20%	21%	
Asia	50%	17%	
África	50%	26%	
	Sector cafetero		
World	70%	20%	(ITC, 2021)
Uganda	n/a	23%	(United Nations, 2022)
Mexico and Central America	n/a	35%	(Canet y otros, 2016)
Kenya	n/a	29%-34%	(United Nations, 2022)
Colombia	n/a	25%	(FNC, 2021)

Table 1: Participation of women in agriculture

Fuente: Elaboración propia

that allows us to visualize and analyze the relationships between the actors involved in a social network and is an important tool to understand the power and gender dynamics present in the coffee production chain and to design policies and programs that promote gender equality in the coffee industry.

ALL EQUALLY

Women coffee farmers face what Montagnon (2017) describes as the “double burden”, combining domestic tasks with work on the farms, limiting their participation in decision-making and leadership roles in the coffee chain. Research, such as that carried out in Uganda in 2012 and referenced by Okamoto (2022), shows that women work up to 15 hours a day, while men work a maximum of 8 hours, impacting their physical health and their ability to participate in decisions in the farm and the coffee market.

Despite these difficulties, women coffee farmers play crucial roles in all stages of coffee production, although gender inequality persists (SCA, 2018). Although their roles are more recognized, inequality persists, limiting their opportunities in more influential stages of the value chain.

Despite initiatives to support women coffee farmers, there is a lack of female representation in more influential roles as coffee advances towards stages of greater value added and commercialization. The barriers to advancing in the coffee chain limit their opportunities to certain stages of production, showing persistent inequality in the sector.

FEMALE INCOME

A study by the International Trade Center (ITC, 2021) revealed that, although women constitute 70% of the workforce in coffee field work and harvesting, their participation in trade and export functions within producing countries is as only 10%. In Colombia, local

green coffee marketing is largely dominated by men at 80-90%, exacerbating the income gap between genders (Solidaridad, 2022). Despite their crucial contribution to coffee production and marketing, women coffee farmers face significant problems of purchasing power and income control (IICA, 2017).

Women’s remuneration in the sector is often lower or even non-existent, with their contributions going unnoticed, while men control the majority of coffee-related income (Gottlieb, 2022; ICO, 2021). This inequality is fueled by deep-rooted attitudes in rural coffee-growing communities. For example, in Uganda, the idea prevails that women must assist in the cultivation of coffee, but without participating in the profits, which can lead to situations of domestic violence when they try to generate income by secretly selling beans (Okamoto, 2022; Gottlieb, 2022; World Bank, 2022). These traditional biases disrupt household stability and make it difficult for women to have equal financial control.

OWNERS OF WHAT?

According to FAO (2020), women in developing countries own between 3% and 20% of land ownership, despite representing between 20% and 50% of the agricultural workforce. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), laws and traditions limit women’s access to land, preventing them from purchasing land without their husband’s permission and not allowing them to acquire land under customary law (Women for Women International, 2014). This lack of access to credit and land affects women’s ability to generate significant income, creating a vicious cycle for smallholder farmers (FAO, 2020; Women for Women International, 2014). Egwurube (2016) highlights the need to harmonize legislation and traditions to ensure equal access to land and credit for women.

In Latin America, the Inter-American

Development Bank (IDB) indicates that only 18% of women own land compared to 31% of men (ECLAC, 2021). This imbalance directly affects the income of rural women, who earn 30% less on average than rural men, according to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Much of this gap is attributed to lack of access to land ownership and financing (IICA, 2017).

Limited access to credit and other financial resources is an additional challenge for rural women in Latin America, where 75% lack access to credit according to FAO (2020). This lack of financing makes it difficult to invest in technology and equipment to improve the productivity of their lands, perpetuating inequality in access to resources.

ABOUT THE LEADERSHIP

Female representation in leadership roles within agricultural organizations, ministries and representative bodies is low, which hinders the gender gap in agriculture (IFAD, 2016). Although women participate more in tasting tables, they have limitations in leading associations or farms due to prohibitions in cooperatives due to lack of land ownership or cultural prejudices (Gottlieb, 2022). When they achieve leadership roles, they often lack the training or confidence to be effective in their roles (George Washington University, 2018).

In family settings, control of income and assets often determines decision-making power, leading to men, naturally considered landowners, taking control of decisions (Gottlieb, 2022). This family dynamic reinforces the lack of autonomy of women in making agricultural and economic decisions.

EMPOWERING

The economic empowerment of rural women, according to Klugman and others (2014), not only drives economic development, but also contributes to poverty reduction. The FAO highlights that women spend the vast majority of their income from agricultural work on domestic needs such as food, education, health and home improvements, while men tend to spend at least 25% on non-essential goods (FAO, 2020).

The reinvestment of up to 90% of earnings in the home by women, as mentioned by the FNC (2023), is essential to lift families out of generational poverty. The economic empowerment of women in coffee-growing regions not only benefits families, but also has positive impacts on entire communities, as highlighted by FAO (2020).

WOMEN OF COFFEE IN COLOMBIA

The “Women Coffee Growers Program” of the National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia (FNC, 2023) aims to promote equal opportunities between men and women in the coffee industry. The FNC has developed a gender equity policy, being the first in the agricultural field to do so, after collective collaboration and the fundamental participation of women themselves (Solidaridad, 2022).

This program has trained more than 15,000 women since its inception in 2015, providing them with training in coffee production techniques, leadership, entrepreneurship, and promotion of gender equality (López et al., 2017). It has facilitated their participation in decision-making spaces, fostering support networks among women coffee growers (Santos, 2022), and the results indicate improvements in access to resources, increased income and a better quality of life for the participants.

The impact is visible in the significant

increase in women coffee producers in Colombia; It is estimated that in 2020 they represent 34% of the country's producers (Santos, 2022). These data reflect the success of the program in its goal of promoting gender equality and increasing female participation in the coffee industry.

CONCLUSIONS

The relevance of the role of women in coffee growing transcends mere coffee harvesting, to deepening agronomic knowledge, administration, leadership and personnel management on farms. Their participation ranges from work in the field, harvesting and processing of the cherry, while, in other stages, such as transportation and marketing, their presence tends to decrease (McCarthy, 2016).

Although women play critical roles in planting, harvesting, cleaning and sorting coffee beans, they also take on additional responsibilities such as managing the home and raising children. Despite this vital contribution, they face restrictions in access to resources and opportunities, limiting their ability to improve their lives and those of their families.

The current situation of women coffee farmers in Latin America reflects inequalities and marginalization. These women often encounter barriers in access to land, financing, education and technology. However, there are organizations and initiatives dedicated to improving this scenario and promoting

gender equality in the coffee sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Some recommendations to improve the situation of women in coffee agriculture could be:

- a) Equitable access to land: Ensuring that women have access to land to grow coffee is crucial to improving their situation.
- b) Financing and training: Providing access to financing and technical training for women coffee farmers is essential to improve their skills and increase their coffee production.
- c) Representation and voice: Encourage women's representation in key organizations and decisions to ensure that their needs and concerns are considered.
- d) Education and empowerment: Provide education on rights and empowerment to women so that they can defend their interests and make informed decisions.
- e) Certification and fair trade: Support certification and fair trade to ensure that women receive a fair price for their work and coffee production.

These recommendations can be implemented by organizations, governments and the coffee industry to improve the situation of women coffee farmers and promote gender equality in the sector.

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