

RESULTS

Profile of women landowners in Senegal: 2018- 2020

The results show that the majority of plot owners in all three survey years are men. In 2020, 16.2% of plot owners are women as compared to 15.8% in 2019 (with no significant difference in these proportions).

Figure 1: Distribution of cultivated plots according to the sex of the producer

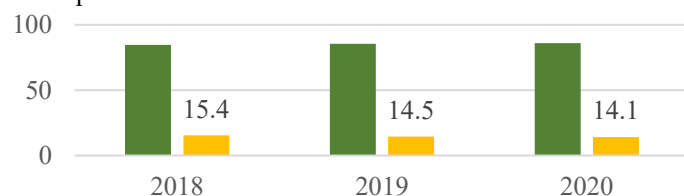
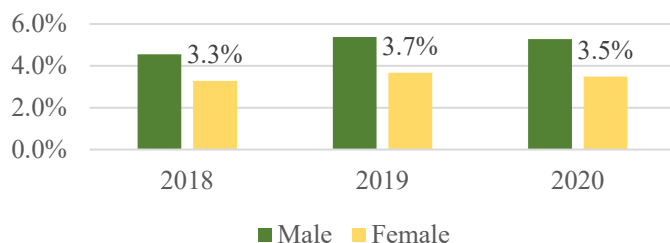


Figure 2: Proportion of producers holding an ownership document



Bivariate analyses of the profiles of women with and without land title revealed:

- Women landholders with documents are older and more likely to be heads of households compared to women owners without documents who are younger, and mostly married to heads of households.
- Women with documents have a higher level of education, are more literate, and have benefited more from specialized training in agriculture, but on average manage smaller parcels than those without documents.
- The land status of women varies by agro-ecological zones, likely reflecting local customary practices. Women landholders with documents are more prevalent in the Senegal River Valley and in the Niayes area.

Determinants of land tenure security

The results of the multivariate analysis show that:

- Participation in formal training in agriculture (which may reflect access to Extension services) as well as the agro-ecological zone of residence (linked to local social norms around women's land ownership) are both strongly associated with the likelihood of holding a formal title deed among both women and men. Among

male owners, the fact of residing in Niayes or Casamance rather than in the Groundnut Basin is positive associated with holding a title deed. Producers in the Senegal River valley, regardless of gender, are more likely to hold a property document than those in the Groundnut Basin. Similarly, landholders in Eastern Senegal and in the Sylvopastoral Zone are less likely to hold a title deed.

- Certain socio-demographic characteristics such as age, marital status, and level of education are associated with the possession of a property document only among women. A female landholder over 40 years old is more likely to have a document of ownership than younger women. Widows are less likely to have a property document than married women. And more educated women are more likely to hold a title document – with the effect of secondary education stronger than the effect of elementary education alone.
- On the other hand, among male owners, in addition to training in agriculture and agro-ecological zone, factors associated with possession of a land title include the number of plots operated, the presence of a land improvement on the plot (e.g., irrigation, erosion control), and the practice of market gardening. Managing a larger number of plots is negatively associated with having a land title – this reflects many producers having some titled plots and other untitled plots. Meanwhile, the practice of market gardening and investments in land improvements on plots are positively associated with holding of a title deed (but only among men).

Recommendations

In the light of the results of this study, a number of measures could facilitate women's access to land and the formalization of land rights.

- Provide information to women on the importance of having legal rights and involve women more in the decision-making process. This necessarily involves improving access to education and enhancing women's knowledge of legal issues. At the same time, officials issuing land titles should also be sensitized on the importance of women's land rights.
- Strengthen the technical capacity of women already working in the agricultural sector and set up specialized training in agriculture while facilitating access for new entrants.
- Facilitate the transformation of customary rights into legal rights. This must be accompanied by a reduction in the administrative procedures and the costs associated with formalization.

- Allocate funding to women to help them access market opportunities. The present commercialization of agriculture risks further excluding women from land, because it reinforces the concentration of land tenure among men who are heads of agricultural households.

Any such measures must be accompanied by efforts to ensure that women also have the capacity to use land effectively. Efforts to improve access to other resources, such as financial, technological and extension services as well as markets, are therefore important complements to any reform program.

Study contributions

In Senegal, access to land and land ownership is mainly governed by customary tenure systems. Even though land legislation advocates equal access to land between women and men, custom often only recognizes secondary

land use rights for women, acquired through a spouse or partner, or other male relative or household member.

Developing laws and policies that bring formal and customary land tenure law closer requires an inclusive process. A participatory approach must be adopted to first make the actors aware of the marginalization of women in land tenure security and then put in place reforms to facilitate access and registration of customary rights as legal rights – while recognizing that some customary systems have also historically included barriers to women’s land access and ownership.

Findings of this study underscore enduring disparities in women’s ownership of land titles, but also variation in the factors most strongly associated with obtaining titles among women (education, literacy) and men (market access, land holdings), and across geographies in Senegal (in part reflecting variation in social norms).

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