

Promoting Decent Work and Equal Pay in the Informal Agricultural Sector: A Gender Perspective

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Abstract: Agriculture, the oldest human activity, is the livelihood for millions, especially in developing countries where it drives economic growth and poverty reduction. However, the informal agricultural sector lacks poor working conditions, low wages, lack of legal protection, and significant gender-based discrimination. Women often face unequal access to resources, training, and fair wages, perpetuating a cycle of poverty. This review paper examines decent work and equal pay in the informal agricultural sector, focusing on gender disparities, and offers recommendations to promote gender equality, empowerment, and sustainable development through targeted interventions and policy improvements. The study used the PRISMA model for a systematic literature review. The study highlighted the five dimensions of decent work identified by the ILO, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding and addressing challenges in achieving decent work. The review also identified several factors influencing decent work and equal pay, including government policies, market dynamics, social norms, power dynamics, and social security programs. The review further discussed the gender dimension of decent work and equal pay, highlighting the gender wage gap and the challenges faced by women in accessing decent work and fair compensation in the sector. Innovative approaches to promoting decent work and equal pay were also discussed, including social protection programs, collective bargaining, microfinance initiatives, vocational training, and digital tools.

Keywords: Agriculture, Decent work, Equal pay, Gender equality, Informal sector

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1. Introduction

Agriculture is the oldest human activity, providing a livelihood for millions of workers worldwide. However, many vulnerable and marginalized individuals experience deficits in decent work. In developing countries, agriculture serves as the backbone of the economy, offering significant employment and income opportunities for the rural population (Losch, 2022). Research has shown that agriculture plays a crucial role in a nation's

economic development by examining the impact of alternative growth and poverty reduction in low-income African countries (Diao et al., 2010). Furthermore, agriculture can stimulate growth in other sectors like manufacturing and transportation by creating demand for their products and services (Conroy, 2021). However, the agricultural sector has been neglected to the extent that its contributions and barriers to performance have been identified, and necessary policy recommendations have been proposed (Aremu, 2014). Workers in the informal sector of agriculture often live below accepted standards,

lacking adequate facilities and earning insufficient income to meet their daily needs (Muthusamy & Ibrahim, 2016).

The informal economic sector encompasses all economic activities that are not covered by formal arrangements (ILO, 2016). The informal agricultural sector refers to work that is not officially recognized or regulated by the government. This sector is characterized by low pay, poor working conditions, lack of social protection, informal employment, and discrimination, particularly against women and marginalized groups (Seubert, Glaser, & Hopfgartner, 2021). Workers in the informal sector of agriculture face significant and diverse challenges. One major challenge is the lack of legal protection, leaving them without access to social security or other benefits. They may also not be covered by labor laws or minimum wage regulations, making them vulnerable to exploitation and hindering their efforts to improve working conditions. Low wages are another issue, with many informal sector workers receiving inadequate pay despite long hours and difficult conditions. This situation perpetuates a cycle of poverty, making it challenging for workers to support themselves and their families. Health and safety risks are also prevalent, as the informal workers often lack protective gear while working with hazardous chemicals or equipment (Khanal, Sondhi, & Giri, 2021). Inadequate training on the proper use of PPE and a lack of awareness about the risks of occupational hazards further increased the vulnerability of workers (Giri, Adhikari, Khanal, Chipalu, Aryal, & Pandey, 2023). Limited training opportunities further hinder their ability to compete in the market and earn a decent living (Frey & MacNaughton, 2016). Lack of awareness, inadequate training, and poor working conditions have been identified as key factors contributing to the occupational health and safety (Bajracharya, Magar, Karki, Giri, & Khanal, 2023).

The concept of decent work, introduced by the International Labour Organization (ILO), emphasizes that all workers should have access to productive employment with fair wages, social protection, and respect for fundamental rights (European Commission, 2002). The ILO identifies four key dimensions of decent work: employment opportunities, social protection, rights at work, and opportunities for training and development. These dimensions encompass all types of work, adequate work opportunities, fair remuneration, safety, healthy conditions, and income security (Ghai, 2003). Decent work ensures equal and safe opportunities for men and women (Zammit et al., 2021). Improving the effectiveness of agriculture for development requires upgrading the skill levels of rural individuals, providing job-specific skills for productive work in agriculture (ILO, 2019). Decent work also provides job security and protects women workers from discrimination in accessing training, skills development, and employment (ILO, 2009).

In addition to the four dimensions, the gender dimension of decent work highlights the importance of promoting gender equality and empowering women in the workforce (Rai, Brown, & Ruwanpura, 2019). This involves ensuring equal pay for equal work, promoting

access to education and training, and addressing workplace discrimination and harassment. By promoting decent work practices, we can create a more equitable and just society that values the contributions of all workers and promotes sustainable development (Hepple, 2001). Promoting decent work requires a multi-faceted approach that considers the different dimensions of decent work and addresses the specific needs and experiences of different groups of workers.

The gender dimension of decent work and equal pay in the agricultural sector is crucial because women constitute a significant portion of the workforce in agriculture. Despite their significant contributions, women often face systemic discrimination, including unequal access to education, credit, land, and other productive resources (Oxfam, 2019). Women's participation in agriculture is vital for ensuring food security and reducing poverty in rural areas. However, they are often limited to low-paid, low-status work with limited access to training and career development opportunities. Moreover, women's work in agriculture is often informal and undervalued, resulting in lower wages and fewer benefits. Promoting gender equality in the agricultural sector requires promoting women's access to land, credit, and other productive resources, as well as investing in their education and training. It is crucial to address the root causes of gender inequality, including cultural norms and practices that limit women's opportunities and perpetuate gender-based violence. Decent work and equal pay practices in the agricultural sector must also consider the specific needs and experiences of women (International Workers' Symposium on Decent Work in Agriculture, 2003). This includes ensuring safe and healthy working conditions, providing access to social protection, promoting work-life balance, and eliminating gender-based discrimination and harassment. Promoting gender equality in the agricultural sector is essential for achieving sustainable development, reducing poverty, and ensuring food security. Decent work and equal pay practices that consider the gender dimension can help foster more inclusive and equitable opportunities for all workers, including women.

This review paper focuses on the informal sector, where a substantial portion of agricultural work occurs. Specifically, it examines the issue of equal pay in the informal agriculture sector. It also emphasizes the gender dimension of decent work and equal pay, aiming to uncover gender disparities and provide recommendations for promoting gender equality and empowerment. The paper aims to analyze the current state of decent work comprehensively and equal pay in the informal agricultural sector, identify research gaps, and propose strategies for improvement. By examining existing literature, research studies, and policy documents, this paper aims to provide insights and recommendations to policymakers, organizations, and stakeholders on effective interventions and policies that promote decent work and equal pay, particularly gender equality.

2. Materials and methods

The researchers searched relevant literature using multiple databases and search engines, including Taylor & Francis Online, Science Direct, Frontiers, Springer, ResearchGate, NepJOL, and Google Scholar. All the authors of this paper collaborated through a research network formed by the Global Research Institute and Training Center.

The keywords used in the search included "decent work", "equal pay", "informal sector", "agriculture Nepal", "gender discrimination", "social protection", "labour rights", "employment opportunities", "gender inequality", and "problems faced by informal workers." The articles reviewed included journals, books, reports, conference papers, and theses. The systematic review process was used following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) model (Figure 1) with the identification of 118

records from various databases. After removing 14 duplicates, 102 unique records remained for screening. During the screening phase, 99 reports were retrieved for further examination, and 97 were assessed for eligibility based on the pre-defined inclusion criteria. Ultimately, 83 studies were deemed suitable and included in the final review.

The gathered literature was analyzed by categorizing and synthesizing the information found in these sources. The analysis identified key themes, patterns, and factors related to decent work and equal pay in the informal agricultural sector. The findings were then discussed, including the International Labour Organization's (ILO) five dimensions of decent work and other contextual factors affecting the provision of decent work and equal pay, particularly from a gender perspective.

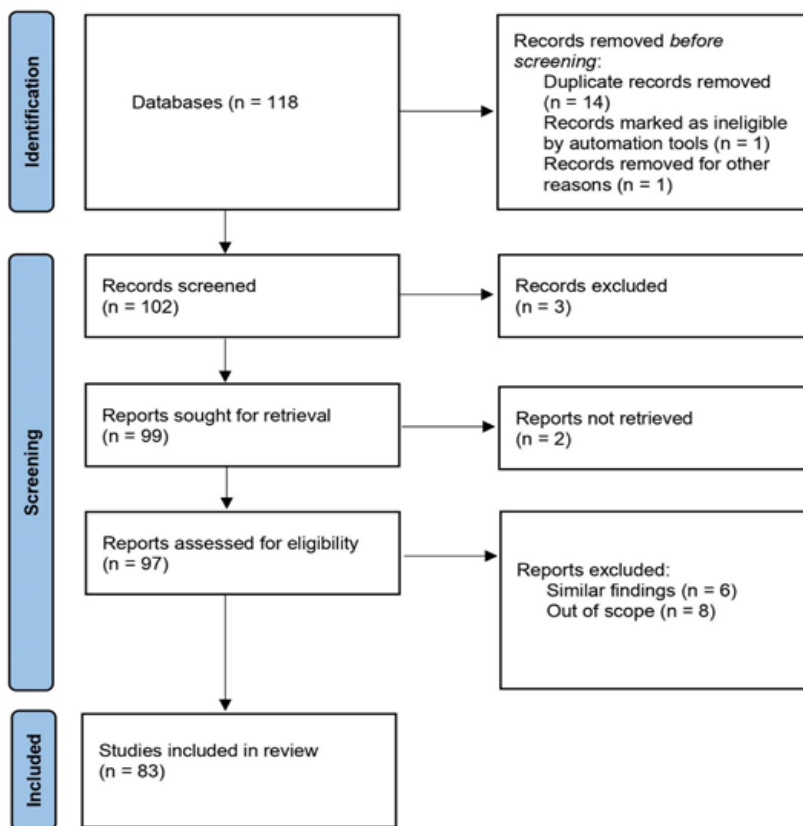


Figure 1: PRISMA flow diagram used in the study

3. Results and discussion

In recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the concept of decent work and its significance for long-term development and poverty reduction (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2020; Randriamamonjy & Rakotondrainibe, 2019). The International Labour Organization (ILO) has played a pivotal role in promoting the concept of decent work, which has garnered widespread endorsement from various stakeholders (Branisa, Klasen, & Ziegler, 2017).

The five dimensions of decent work identified by the ILO provide a comprehensive framework for

understanding and addressing the challenges in achieving decent work. The first dimension, employment opportunities, emphasizes the importance of productive work that offers fair wages and job security, highlighting the issue of insufficient employment opportunities in many developing countries (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2020). The second dimension focuses on workplace rights, including the elimination of forced labor and child labor, freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the prohibition of discrimination (Kabeer, 2015). These rights are crucial for ensuring the dignity and fair treatment of workers. The third dimension, social safety, highlights the significance of social security measures such as health

insurance, maternity leave, and pensions in providing protection for workers and their families (Randriamamonjy & Rakotondrainibe, 2019). Social protection plays a vital role in mitigating the impact of economic shocks and reducing poverty. The fourth dimension, social dialogue, emphasizes the importance of involving workers and employers in decision-making processes that affect their lives and livelihoods (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2020). Social dialogue can foster cooperation, leading to improved working conditions and increased productivity. Lastly, the fifth dimension of decent work, gender equality, underscores the need for equal opportunities and remuneration for women in the informal agricultural sector (Kabeer, 2015; Branisa, Klasen, & Ziegler, 2017). Women in this sector often face additional barriers to accessing decent work and fair compensation.

Several studies have shed light on the challenges and opportunities related to promoting decent work in specific contexts. Meagher (2017) highlights the gendered impact of poor working conditions and discrimination in global value chains, while Seidu (2019) reveals the occupational safety and health challenges faced by cocoa farmers in Ghana. Valentin and Lemaître (2018) and Franzoni and Marconi (2018) emphasize the importance of context-specific interventions to improve women's employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. Jolliffe (2017) uncovers gender wage differentials in the informal sector in Mexico and Peru, while Tegege and Gebreegziabher (2018) explore the gendered experiences and coping mechanisms of smallholder farmers in Ethiopia.

3.1. Factors Influencing the Provision of Decent Work and Equal Pay

The provision of decent work and fair pay in the informal agriculture sector is influenced by a complex interplay of economic, social, and cultural factors (Table 2). Government policies and regulations, such as minimum wage laws and labor standards, are important for ensuring decent work and equal pay (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2020). However, enforcement of these policies is often lacking, particularly in the informal sector where labor is not formally recognized (Randriamamonjy & Rakotondrainibe, 2019). Market dynamics, such as fluctuations in commodity prices, also impact the sector's ability to provide decent work and equal pay (Branisa, Klasen, & Ziegler, 2017). Social norms, including gender roles and discrimination, further influence the provision of decent work and equal pay, particularly for women (Razavi, 2015).

One specific example is the caste discrimination faced by the Dalit group in Nepal, where their social and cultural status based on ancestral occupation segregation leads to social and economic discrimination. The wage disparity between Dalits and non-Dalits can be attributed to the endowment effect, where Dalits have lower education levels, work in low-wage jobs, and predominantly engage in informal sector labor (Karki & Bohara, 2014).

Srivastava (2019) examined seasonal and circular labor migrants and found that companies often hire low-cost, highly flexible laborers who work long hours and perform hazardous tasks. The report highlighted that impoverished and lower-caste workers are disproportionately represented in this labor force.

Power dynamics in the workplace are also significant factors affecting the provision of decent work and fair pay. The bargaining power of employers and workers, as well as their access to information and resources, influence their ability to negotiate fair wages and working conditions (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2020). Education and skill levels of workers are also important, as they impact their bargaining power and ability to secure better-paying jobs (Branisa, Klasen, & Ziegler, 2017).

Additionally, the availability and accessibility of social security programs, such as health insurance and retirement benefits, can impact the provision of decent work and equal wages. Social protection programs can act as a buffer during economic instability, assisting workers in maintaining fair working conditions and pay (Randriamamonjy & Rakotondrainibe, 2019).

Other factors that affect the provision of decent work and equal pay include the prevalence of child labor and forced labor, as well as discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, or nationality (ILO, 1999). Moreover, the presence of conflict, violence, and natural disasters can hinder the provision of decent work and equitable pay, particularly for vulnerable groups such as women and children (Kabeer, 2015).

To promote decent work in the agricultural sector, it is essential to implement various strategies. Collaboration between agricultural extension services, NGOs, and farmer organizations can foster knowledge sharing and provide training on sustainable agricultural practices, improving access to credit and supporting collective bargaining efforts (Yawson and Yawson, 2018). Social protection programs should be promoted to ensure income support, healthcare, and other benefits for informal workers in agriculture (Deininger and Liu, 2013). Government policies should focus on providing legal recognition and protection to informal workers, ensuring compliance with labor standards and regulations (Sibande and Sithole, 2019). Creating awareness among consumers and buyers about fair prices and fair labor practices in the agricultural supply chain is crucial (Maertens and Swinnen, 2015). Additionally, empowering women in the informal agricultural sector through access to education and training, increased participation in decision-making processes, and promoting gender equality can contribute to creating a more inclusive and equitable work environment (Tegege and Gebreegziabher, 2018). By implementing these measures, it is possible to enhance working conditions, livelihoods, and overall well-being for agricultural workers.

3.2. Gender Dimension of Decent Work and Equal Pay

Women in the informal agricultural sector face increasing challenges in accessing decent work and equal pay for equal work. The gender wage gap is prevalent in the industry, with women earning less than men in similar positions (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2020). Women often experience exclusion from decision-making processes and encounter discrimination in areas such as training, promotion, and employment opportunities (Kabeer, 2015). Additionally, women are more likely to be engaged in jobs that lack social safety nets and are characterized by instability and informality (Razavi, 2015). Promoting gender equality and decent work for women in the sector necessitates addressing gender-based discrimination (Branisa, Klasen, & Ziegler, 2017).

Although women are disproportionately active in agricultural employment, they are often underrepresented in official government labor force participation statistics. Large-scale growers often hold control over collective bargaining, further marginalizing small-scale farmers and their workers (Scherrer & Verma, 2018). A study by Wirba et al. (2021) highlighted the significant gender-based wage gap in Cameroon's labor market. According to the research, women were more likely than men to participate in joint decision-making regarding labor market involvement, particularly in informal work.

Employers take advantage of lower compensation and irregular working hours to increase female productivity. Simultaneously, women perceive the informal sector as more advantageous for balancing household and market labor responsibilities and providing a safety net for their families. While the gender wage gap has narrowed in the formal sector, women have not experienced similar progress in the informal sector (Elgin & Elveren, 2021).

The differences in female labor force participation rates and gender gaps have been extensively studied by Ganguli et al. (2014). Their analysis of data from 39 advanced and developing countries, focusing on the age group of 35 to 44 years, revealed varying participation rates and gaps. Countries like Ghana, Kenya, and South Africa had similar female participation rates to advanced economies, while certain Asian countries such as Cambodia, China, Mongolia, and Viet Nam showed relatively high participation rates with a participation gap below 20 percent. However, in countries like India, Malaysia, and the Philippines, the gap was nearly 50 percent. Latin American countries had participation gaps ranging from 29 percent in Argentina to 53 percent in Costa Rica. The highest participation gap was found in some Arab countries, exceeding 60 percent (Ganguli et al., 2014).

A recent study examining 40 advanced and developing countries found that women generally have lower average annual incomes compared to men. On average, women earned anywhere from 57 percent (in Switzerland) to 97 percent (in the Philippines) of what men earned (Rani et al., 2015). In some countries, the gender wage gap increased slightly, ranging from one to five percentage points. This is in line with previous studies by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2014, which reported that women's average wages were generally 4 to 36 percent lower than men's. Furthermore, studies by

Nopo and Hoyos (2010) and others have observed a declining trend in gender wage gaps in Latin American countries over the past decade.

Gendered norms and social institutions within households can result in differences in time availability and influence women's autonomy and bargaining power. These factors have implications for various development outcomes, such as child mortality and girls' education (Branisa, Klasen & Ziegler, 2013). Some countries, including Canada, South Africa, and the UK, have implemented Household Satellite Accounts to recognize and quantify the value of unpaid social reproductive work in the national GDP. These efforts aim to raise awareness about the importance of such work and advocate for increased state investment in social infrastructure to address gendered employment assumptions (Razavi & Miller, 1995; Women's Budget Group, 2014).

Early researchers such as Treiman and Hartmann (1981) found evidence linking the proportion of females in an occupation to lower wages earned in that occupation, highlighting gender-based wage disparities. Phillips and Taylor (1980) argued that the designation of certain work as "inferior" for women was not based on the actual quality of their labor but rather on societal perceptions of women's capacity to perform such work. The World Bank/IFC (2011) conducted a comprehensive analysis across 141 countries, identifying significant legal disparities between men and women that affect their motivations and abilities to participate in paid employment or establish their own businesses. Anker and Hein (1985) also highlighted biases in favor of male workers displayed by some employers, citing reasons such as perceived weaker labor market attachment, higher rates of absenteeism, and turnover among women.

3.3. Innovative Approaches to Promoting Decent Work and Equal Pay

To promote decent work and fair compensation in the informal agricultural sector, various innovative approaches have been implemented. Social protection programs, including cash transfers and social insurance, can serve as a safety net for vulnerable workers and contribute to poverty eradication (Randriamamonjy & Rakotondrainibe, 2019). Collective bargaining can be utilized to negotiate better pay and improved working conditions, particularly for workers in the unorganized sector (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2020). Microfinance programs offer small loans to workers in the informal sector, enabling them to expand their businesses and enhance their living standards (Razavi, 2015). Vocational training and skill-building initiatives are also crucial in equipping workers with the necessary skills to access higher-paying jobs and enhance job security (Kabeer, 2015). Lastly, the use of digital tools such as mobile money and e-commerce platforms can facilitate connections between workers in the unorganized sector and formal markets, empowering them with increased bargaining power (Branisa, Klasen, & Ziegler, 2017).

In their examination of survey data, Cheikh and Moisseron (2021) explored why some individuals receiving social assistance programs, such as cash transfers and subsidized health insurance, choose to work in the informal sector where they are not taxed or contribute to social insurance. The study found that these programs can sometimes attract workers to the informal sector instead of joining a social insurance program.

Stuart, Samman, and Hunt (2018) advocate for minimum wage policies and highlight their benefits for workers in the informal sector. The study also suggests the importance of pensions, social security, health coverage, and support for workers' organizations and skills upgrading.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many women engaged in informal economic activities such as selling agricultural commodities on the streets to support their families when one or both income providers had lost their jobs or faced restrictions. As a result, street vending culture can be developed to provide financial independence for women involved in the agriculture supply chain (Maurice et al., 2020).

In Ghana, the informal sector employs a significant portion of the workforce, comprising approximately 80 percent (Hormeku, 1998). However, this sector faces numerous challenges, including underemployment, poor working conditions, uncertain work arrangements, and low wages (Table 1). These factors contribute to high income insecurity among individuals working in the informal sector, which can have a detrimental impact on their livelihoods.

Within the informal agricultural sector in rural areas of Ghana, agricultural work dominates, accounting for about 75 percent of informal employment (GSS, 2008). This includes activities such as fishing, fish processing, and agro-based processing. In more urban areas, a higher proportion of workers, around 43 percent, are engaged in non-agricultural informal activities.

To promote decent work in the informal agricultural sector, several key factors need to be addressed. Equitable compensation plays a vital role, ensuring that employees receive fair wages commensurate with their abilities, education, and expertise. Research by Burgess and Naumann (2018) highlights the importance of fair wages in fostering higher levels of job satisfaction, motivation, and dedication among workers, while considering the moderating influence of distributive justice perceptions.

Workplace safety is another essential aspect. Providing safe and healthy working conditions is crucial for promoting decent work. Research conducted by Donaldson-Feilder, Lewis, and Yarker (2018) demonstrates that employees who work in safe and healthy environments experience improved physical and mental well-being, lower rates of work-related injuries, and reduced symptoms of mental health issues such as fatigue and cynicism.

Social security measures, including provisions for healthcare, retirement benefits, and paid leave, play a critical role in promoting decent work. Access to social protection enhances job security, reduces financial stress,

and contributes to overall well-being (World Health Organization, 2019).

Achieving a favorable work-life balance is also important. Employees who can effectively manage their work duties alongside personal and family commitments experience lower work-related stress, enhanced job satisfaction, and increased engagement in their work. Allen, Golden, and Shockley (2015) suggest that an effective work-life balance leads to these positive outcomes.

Lastly, job security, which ensures stability and continuity of employment, is a fundamental aspect of decent work. Research by De Witte (2017) highlights the benefits of job security, including lower stress levels, higher job satisfaction, and improved overall well-being.

Policy Measures

The Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention of 1969 (No. 129) is an international agreement that sets global standards for enforcing national labor laws concerning work conditions and worker protection in the agricultural sector. Its objective is to prevent work-related accidents and illnesses by regulating risks within the agricultural work environment. The convention includes provisions for preventive and protective measures, machine safety and ergonomics, proper handling and transportation of materials, effective management of chemicals, and coverage for work-related injuries or diseases.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) operates a cooperative program that aims to improve the performance of producer organizations. Through collaboration with social partners, the ILO seeks to enhance the representation and bargaining power of small-scale growers and agricultural workers. According to estimates from the ILO, women's earnings in 2008-09 were 22.9% lower than men's, an improvement from the 26.2% gap observed in 1995. However, at the current rate of progress, it would take more than 75 years to achieve equal pay for work of equal value, as stated by the ILO in 2011. It is important to note that these estimates often do not fully account for wage disparities in the informal economy, where a significant number of women work, and where earning gaps are even more significant (Chen et al., 2005; Avirgan et al., 2005).

In Latin America, women working in the informal economy earned approximately 53% of what men earned in 1998 (Barrientos, 2002). Female agricultural wage laborers in North East Ghana were paid significantly lower wages, ranging from one-third to one-half of the daily wages earned by male laborers. Similarly, the Benin poverty assessment revealed that rural women were paid approximately half as much as men, with the justification that the work assigned to them was considered less physically demanding (Whitehead, 2009). In Vietnam, despite no significant disparities in working hours, education, and seniority, men in informal employment earned almost 50% more than women (Cling et al., 2011). In Egypt, the percentage of women's wages in formal employment compared to men's wages increased from 70% in 1988 to 86% in 1998. However, in informal

employment, the percentage declined from 82% to 53% during the same period (Avirgan et al., 2005).

According to a report by the ILO, policies and initiatives aimed at promoting decent work and equal pay in the informal agricultural sector can be effective, but their success depends on factors such as their design, implementation, and enforcement (ILO, 2018). The report also highlights challenges in implementing these policies, including limited government and civil society capacity to reach all informal workers, weak enforcement of labor laws, and the lack of bargaining power among informal workers to negotiate better working conditions and wages (ILO, 2018).

Future research and policy initiatives should focus on identifying practical solutions to promote equal wages and decent work in the informal agricultural sector. This entails critically evaluating existing programs and selecting the most effective implementation strategies (Randriamamonjy & Rakotondrainibe, 2019). Furthermore, there should be efforts to enhance the enforcement of labor laws and regulations, particularly in the informal sector (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2020). Finally, addressing gender-based discrimination and advancing gender equality should remain central to initiatives aimed at achieving equal pay and decent work in the industry (Kabeer, 2015).

Table 1: Challenges Faced by Workers in the Informal Agricultural Sector

Challenges	Description
Lack of legal protection	Workers lack access to social security and other benefits. They may not be covered by labor laws or minimum wage regulations.
Low wages	Many informal sector workers receive inadequate pay despite long hours and difficult conditions. This perpetuates a cycle of poverty.
Health and safety risks	Workers lack protective gear while working with hazardous chemicals or equipment, leading to safety hazards.
Limited training opportunities	Workers have limited access to training, hindering their ability to compete in the market and earn a decent living.
Discrimination	Women and marginalized groups face discrimination in the informal agricultural sector.

Table 2: Factors Influencing Decent Work and Equal Pay in the Informal Agricultural Sector

Factors	Description
Government policies and regulations	Minimum wage laws and labor standards are important but enforcement is often lacking in the informal sector.
Market dynamics	Fluctuations in commodity prices impact the sector's ability to provide decent work and equal pay.
Social norms	Gender roles and discrimination influence the provision of decent work and equal pay, particularly for women.
Power dynamics	Bargaining power, access to information and resources, and education/skill levels impact fair wages and working conditions.
Social security programs	Availability and accessibility of social security programs impact decent work and equal pay.
Child labor and forced labor	Prevalence of child labor and forced labor affects the provision of decent work and equal pay.
Conflict, violence, and natural disasters	Presence of these factors hinders the provision of decent work and equitable pay, especially for vulnerable groups.

4. Conclusion

There is a need to promote decent work and equal pay in the informal agricultural sector to achieve sustainable development and reduce poverty. Innovative approaches such as social protection programs, collective bargaining, microfinance initiatives, vocational training, and digital tools can be adopted to address the challenges faced in this sector. It is crucial to address gender-based discrimination and the gender wage gap to ensure decent work for women who encounter significant obstacles in accessing

fair employment and equal pay. Taking a holistic and multi-dimensional approach that considers economic, social, and cultural factors is essential in creating a sustainable agricultural sector that benefits all workers, irrespective of their gender or employment status.

Government policies play a vital role in shaping the provision of decent work and equal pay. Implementing and enforcing labour laws and standards while extending legal protection to informal agricultural workers is important. Government policies should also focus on providing legal recognition and protection to informal workers and raising consumer awareness about fair labour practices. Empowering women through education, training,

and increased participation fosters a more inclusive work environment. Collaboration among stakeholders can enhance knowledge sharing and training on sustainable practices, while social protection programs should be promoted to provide income support and other benefits to informal workers. Additionally, creating consumer awareness about fair prices and labour practices in the agricultural supply chain will contribute to a more equitable sector. By promoting gender equality and empowering women, particularly through education and training, an inclusive and equitable work environment can be fostered in the sector.

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