

Women's Agricultural Economy in North and East Syria: (Challenges and Opportunities)

A Study Issued by the Research and Studies Department of GAV for Relief and Development



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Introduction:

The feminist agricultural economy is a key element in sustainable rural development, as women play a prominent role in agricultural production and the management of natural resources, particularly in regions where agriculture is the primary source of livelihood.

In North and East Syria, women have taken a prominent role in the agricultural sector as active participants, largely due to the economic, social, and political conditions imposed by years of conflict and structural changes within local communities. However, women working in this field face numerous challenges related to land ownership, access to resources, financing, and technology, in addition to socio-cultural barriers that limit their ability to achieve economic independence.

The aim of this study is to shed light on the reality of the feminist agricultural economy in North and East Syria by reviewing the roles women play in agricultural production and the associated value chains, and analyzing the challenges hindering their progress in this field. Additionally, the study seeks to explore the available opportunities to enhance their economic participation, whether through local initiatives, supporting women's cooperatives, or improving access to agricultural resources and markets.

Given the increasing importance of women's role in rebuilding rural communities, this study discusses how to enhance the feminist agricultural economy and adopt supportive policies, including vocational training, credit facilities, and support for small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as creating a social environment that encourages the economic empowerment of women. It also discusses possible solutions to address the obstacles faced by women working in agriculture.

This study contributes to the ongoing discussion on the role of women in agricultural development and aims to provide practical recommendations that can assist policymakers and development institutions in creating more equitable and effective policies to strengthen the feminist agricultural economy in North and East Syria.

- **Significance of the Study:**

1. Highlighting the role of women in achieving food security and sustainable development in the region.
2. Analyzing the challenges hindering women's participation in the agricultural economy and proposing solutions to enhance their role.
3. Exploring available opportunities to strengthen the participation of rural women in economic development.

- **Research Objectives:**

1. Analyzing the role of women in the agricultural economy in North and East Syria, with a focus on their contributions to agricultural production, shaping economic structures, and managing small projects.
2. Identifying the main challenges faced by women in this sector, including economic, social, and environmental challenges.
3. Identifying opportunities that can enhance women's contributions to the development of the agricultural sector.
4. Providing practical recommendations to strengthen the role of women in the agricultural economy, contributing to sustainable development in the region.

- **Research Methodology:**

This study relies on a descriptive and analytical approach to understand the reality of the feminist agricultural economy in North and East Syria, and to analyze the challenges and opportunities available to enhance women's role in this sector. The study utilizes the following tools and sources for data collection and analysis:

- **Primary Sources:**

1. Questionnaires: To survey the views of women working in agriculture regarding the challenges they face and the opportunities available for their economic empowerment.
2. Field Observations: Based on field visits to agricultural areas where women are actively involved in the agricultural sector.

- **Secondary Sources:**

1. Review of Scientific Literature: On feminist agricultural economics and rural development.
2. Review of Reports: Issued by local and international organizations on the role of women in agriculture in Syria.
3. Analysis of Agricultural Policies: Related to women in the region.

- **Analytical Methods:**

1. Qualitative Analysis of Field Observations: To identify patterns and key challenges.
2. Quantitative Analysis of Questionnaires: To track trends and statistics related to women's participation in agriculture.

Theoretical Framework

• The Concept of the Feminist Agricultural Economy:

The agricultural sector is one of the most vital economic sectors relied upon by rural communities in North and East Syria. It serves as a primary source of income and plays a key role in ensuring food security and striving toward self-sufficiency. Women play a significant role in this sector, whether through crop cultivation, livestock raising, or engagement in agricultural processing industries. Nevertheless, their contributions continue to face multiple challenges, including limited access to resources, weak legal protection, and social traditions that constrain their economic independence.

• Definition of the Feminist Agricultural Economy:

The feminist agricultural economy is an interdisciplinary field that focuses on examining the economic and social roles of women in agriculture, with an emphasis on achieving gender justice and empowering women. This field analyzes how agricultural and economic policies affect women, and how their participation in decision-making processes can be strengthened to improve their economic status. It also addresses the challenges faced by women in agriculture, such as limited access to resources (land, financing, technology, and training), wage inequality, and the dual burden of domestic and farm labor. {Agarwal, 1994}

The feminist agricultural economy is defined as a field of study that examines the roles of women in agricultural production and the impact of these roles on both economic and social development. It focuses on analyzing the distribution of agricultural resources between genders and identifying the barriers that limit women's full participation in this sector. Moreover, it emphasizes the significant role of women in achieving food security and promoting environmental sustainability.

• The Role of Women in the Global Agricultural Economy:

Women play a crucial role in the global agricultural economy, making up a significant portion of the agricultural workforce, especially in developing countries. According to reports from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, women account for approximately 43% of the agricultural labor force in developing countries, with this percentage exceeding 50% in specific regions of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Women play essential roles in agriculture, including the following:

1. **Agricultural Production:** Women are involved in cultivating staple crops and managing livestock, making significant contributions to food security.
2. **Food and Water Collection:** In many rural areas, women are responsible for gathering wild foods and water—tasks that are often time-consuming and physically demanding.
3. **Food Processing:** Women are central to the processing and storage of food, which helps reduce waste and improve its nutritional value.
4. **Natural Resource Management:** Women play a crucial role in managing natural resources such as soil and water, often relying on traditional knowledge passed down through generations. (UN Women, 2017).

- **The Importance of Women's Participation in the Agricultural Economy:**

1. Contributing to sustainable development by increasing agricultural productivity.
2. Improving living standards in rural areas.
3. Reducing the economic gender gap.
4. Enhancing food security through women's role in food production and management.

- **The Role of Women in the Agricultural Sector in North and East Syria**

Women in North and East Syria are a fundamental component of the agricultural sector, playing a central role in ensuring food security and driving economic development in the region. Despite facing significant challenges—such as armed conflict and difficult economic conditions—women have managed to establish an active and resilient presence in this vital sector.

In these regions, agriculture serves as a primary source of income for many households, with women playing a substantial role in all stages of the agricultural process—from crop cultivation and harvesting to water resource management and product marketing. Additionally, women are engaged in livestock raising, dairy production, food storage, and provisioning, all of which contribute significantly to strengthening the local economy.

In recent years, efforts to empower women in agriculture have gained prominence through the provision of training and technical support, which has helped improve their productivity and increase their involvement in agricultural decision-making. Furthermore, both local and international initiatives have contributed to strengthening women's roles by facilitating access to agricultural resources such as land, seeds, and equipment.

Women in North and East Syria play a vital role in the agricultural economy, particularly in rural areas. According to reports from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and local studies, women constitute a significant portion of the agricultural labor force in Syria. They are engaged in a variety of agricultural activities that directly contribute to both food security and household income. (FAO, 2020)

- **Agricultural Activities Involving Women in North and East Syria:**

Women in North and East Syria play a pivotal role in the agricultural sector and are actively engaged in a wide range of activities, including:

1. Cultivating staple crops such as wheat, barley, cotton, and various vegetables.
2. Caring for livestock and contributing to the production of dairy and meat products.
3. Participating in agricultural industries, including cheese and jam production, drying fruits and vegetables, and preserving seasonal foods.
4. Working in plant nurseries and cultivating fruit trees as well as medicinal herbs and plants. (UNDP, 2019)

- **The Impact of Women's Participation in Agriculture on the Local Economy**

According to the Arab Women Organization (2019), the participation of women in agricultural activities contributes significantly to the local economy through the following:

1. **Increased Agricultural Production and Self-Sufficiency:** Women's involvement in various stages of agricultural production enhances food availability and reduces reliance on external sources.
2. **Improved Household Income and Economic Stability:** Engaging in agriculture allows women to generate income, contributing to the financial stability of their households.
3. **Empowerment through Agricultural Cooperatives:** Women's participation in agricultural cooperatives strengthens their economic position and promotes collective organization for better access to resources and markets.

- **Consequences of Conflict on the Feminist Agricultural Economy in North and East Syria**

The feminist agricultural economy in North and East Syria has been profoundly affected by the ongoing conflict, which has undermined women's access to both markets and agricultural resources. These disruptions have posed serious challenges to long-term sustainability and economic empowerment.

1. **Impact of Conflict on Access to Markets**

- **Destruction of Infrastructure:** The war has led to widespread destruction of essential infrastructure, including roads and bridges. This has significantly increased the cost and difficulty of transporting agricultural products to markets, particularly for women.
- **Lack of Security:** Insecurity and fear of violence have severely limited women's mobility, restricting their ability to sell and distribute agricultural goods.
- **Shrinking Local Markets:** Large-scale displacement of the population has resulted in a diminished customer base, thereby reducing opportunities for women to market their products locally.
- **Decline in Purchasing Power:** Economic deterioration and inflation have lowered the purchasing power of local communities, leading to a drop in demand for agricultural goods and negatively impacting women farmers' incomes.

2. **Impact of Conflict on Access to Agricultural Resources**

- **Shortage of Agricultural Inputs:** Supply chain disruptions have led to severe shortages in seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides, reducing productivity on farms managed by women.
- **Destruction of Agricultural Land:** Armed conflict has caused widespread damage to agricultural lands, either through direct fighting or environmental contamination, limiting available arable land.
- **Water Scarcity:** The destruction of water infrastructure has significantly reduced access to irrigation, further hindering agricultural production, especially in areas heavily dependent on irrigated farming.

3. Impact of Conflict on the Ability to Plan for a Sustainable Future

The prolonged conflict in North and East Syria has severely undermined the ability of women engaged in agriculture to plan for a sustainable and resilient future. This is reflected in several key dimensions:

- **Political Instability:** Frequent changes in political authority and governance structures have created an environment of uncertainty, making it difficult for women to engage in long-term agricultural planning or to invest in sustainable practices.
- **Lack of Financial Support:** The deterioration of the national economy and shifting donor priorities have led to a significant reduction in financial support for the agricultural sector, limiting women's access to credit, investment, and innovation in agriculture.
- **Limited Access to Education and Training:** Ongoing conflict has disrupted education systems and vocational training programs, reducing women's opportunities to gain knowledge and skills related to modern agricultural techniques and sustainable practices.

• Environmental Impacts on Female Farmers in North and East Syria

Environmental challenges, compounded by climate change and ecological degradation, have further exacerbated the burdens on women farmers in the region.

1. Climate Change

- **Irregular Rainfall Patterns:** Shifts in rainfall timing and volume have disrupted planting cycles and water availability. Since women are often responsible for managing household water resources, this directly increases their labor burden and reduces crop yields.
- **Rising Temperatures:** Elevated temperatures have accelerated soil evaporation, reduced soil moisture, and led to declining agricultural productivity. Women must exert additional effort to sustain farming outputs under increasingly difficult conditions.

2. Desertification

- **Loss of Arable Land:** Expanding desertification, driven by both climate and human activity, has resulted in the depletion of fertile land, reducing the space available for cultivation. This directly impacts women who rely on small-scale farming to support their households.
- **Scarcity of Grazing Land:** Degradation of pasturelands has led to a shortage of livestock fodder, increasing feed costs and threatening the viability of animal husbandry—a sector in which many women are heavily involved.

• Challenges Facing Women in the Agricultural Economy

The challenges confronting women in agriculture in North and East Syria are multifaceted, rooted in social, economic, political, and environmental dynamics. The region—including the governorates of Al-Hasakah, Raqqqa, and Deir ez-Zor—has been disproportionately affected by over a decade of war, resulting in the erosion of agricultural infrastructure and deepening rural poverty.

Social and Cultural Challenges

- **Persistence of Traditional Gender Roles:** In many rural areas, agriculture is traditionally viewed as a male-dominated domain. This perception restricts women's participation and marginalizes their contributions to agricultural production and decision-making.
- **Limited Access to Education and Capacity Building:** Many women lack access to specialized agricultural education and training programs. This deficit hinders their ability to adopt improved farming practices, reduce waste, and increase productivity.
- **Restricted Mobility:** Social norms and insecurity limit women's ability to travel outside the home. This restricts access to markets, cooperatives, training, and agricultural supplies—key components of economic empowerment.

(UN Women, 2018)

Economic Challenges

Women farmers in North and East Syria face substantial economic barriers that limit their participation and success in the agricultural sector:

- **Limited Access to Financial Resources:** Women struggle to access loans and other financial instruments needed to purchase agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and tools. Public and semi-public lending institutions often favor men in rural areas, reinforcing systemic gender bias.
- **Weak Agricultural Ownership:** Land ownership remains highly unequal. Women possess significantly less agricultural land than men, restricting their autonomy in making production-related decisions.
(Syrian Journal of Agricultural Research, 2019)
- **Gender Wage Gap:** When employed as agricultural laborers, women typically receive lower wages than their male counterparts, even when performing identical tasks—contributing to persistent economic disparities.

Market-Related Challenges

Market access is a critical factor for agricultural success, yet women in the region face compounded restrictions:

- **Limited Access to Markets:** Security concerns, damaged infrastructure (including roads and bridges), and social norms restricting women's mobility limit their ability to access local and regional markets.
- **Dependence on Intermediaries:** Due to these constraints, many women are forced to rely on intermediaries to sell their produce, reducing their profit margins and bargaining power.

Legal and Political Challenges

Legal inequality and a lack of supportive public policy further marginalize women in agriculture:

- **Unequal Land Ownership Rights:** Women often lack formal land ownership rights, which limits their eligibility for agricultural grants and development programs.
- **Absence of Supportive Policies:** Few governmental or local policies explicitly support women's participation in agricultural production, training, or leadership.
- **Impact of Conflict:** Persistent conflict and instability have disrupted governance and service delivery, limiting women's ability to operate freely and securely within the agricultural sector.

Environmental and Climatic Challenges

Environmental degradation, exacerbated by conflict and climate change, poses serious threats to agricultural sustainability:

- **Climate Change and Drought:** The region faces recurrent droughts and erratic weather patterns. Women, who often rely on rain-fed agriculture, are disproportionately impacted.
(IFAD, 2023)

- **Soil Degradation:** Unsustainable farming practices, such as monocropping and lack of rotation, have led to soil exhaustion and reduced productivity.
- **Water Scarcity:** Turkish dam-building and water diversion from major rivers like the Euphrates, Khabur, and Jaghjagh have intensified water shortages, severely limiting irrigation.

Infrastructure-Related Challenges

The agricultural sector in North and East Syria suffers from significant infrastructure deficits:

- **Destruction of Infrastructure:** War-related damage to roads, bridges, storage units, and irrigation systems hinders transportation and storage, limiting access to markets and reducing income potential.
- **Lack of Modern Agricultural Tools:** Many female farmers continue to use outdated techniques due to limited access to modern technologies and machinery, which curtails efficiency and yields.

Health-Related Challenges

Women engaged in agricultural labor also contend with considerable health-related risks:

- **Physical Strain:** Farming is physically demanding, and the lack of adequate healthcare services in rural areas leaves many women vulnerable to untreated health conditions.
- **Chemical Exposure:** Inadequate training on the safe use of fertilizers and pesticides exposes women to harmful substances, raising risks of long-term health problems.

Empowerment and Leadership Challenges

Women's limited voice in agricultural governance and representation is a major obstacle to gender equity:

- **Marginalization in Decision-Making:** Women are often excluded from key decision-making bodies at both household and community levels, reducing their ability to influence agricultural practices or advocate for policy changes.
- **Lack of Supportive Networks:** The scarcity of women-centered agricultural organizations deprives women of collective support, training opportunities, and access to resources.

• Opportunities to Enhance Women's Role in the Agricultural Economy

Despite these layered challenges, there are promising avenues for enhancing women's engagement in agriculture in North and East Syria:

- **Growing Awareness of Gender Equity:** Increased local and international focus on women's empowerment can create momentum for institutional reforms and targeted programs.
- **Potential for Cooperative Development:** Establishing women-led agricultural cooperatives can improve market access, increase profits, and promote solidarity.
- **Training and Innovation:** Providing women with agricultural training, climate-resilient techniques, and access to modern tools can significantly enhance productivity and economic independence.
- **Policy Advocacy and Legal Reform:** Pushing for gender-responsive land rights and inclusive agricultural policies can help women secure a stronger foothold in the sector.

1. Socio-Cultural Opportunities

- **Changing Traditional Roles:** Growing awareness of the importance of women's contributions to economic development is gradually challenging conventional gender roles. This shift is creating space for greater acceptance of women's active participation in agricultural production and decision-making processes.
(Now Women Organization, 2020)
- **Expanding Access to Education and Training:** The rise in agricultural education and vocational training programs targeting women has equipped many with knowledge in modern farming techniques, resource management, and agricultural marketing. These programs have helped close the skills gap and boosted women's confidence in leading agricultural initiatives.
- **Support for Women's Agricultural Cooperatives:** Several humanitarian organizations have launched initiatives to encourage the creation of women-led or women-managed agricultural cooperatives. These cooperatives have not only strengthened women's economic empowerment but also provided a collective platform for knowledge-sharing, peer support, and increased market access.

2. Economic Opportunities

- **Improved Access to Finance:** Numerous international and local organizations have enhanced their policies to provide microloans and grants tailored specifically for women, enabling them to launch new agricultural ventures or expand existing farms.
- **Development of Agricultural Value Chains:** There has been a notable increase in women's engagement across agricultural value chains, particularly in the production and marketing of value-added goods—

such as jams, pickles, and other processed food products—which are increasingly visible in local markets.

- **Growth of Local Markets:** In rural areas, the expansion of local markets has created opportunities for women to showcase and sell their agricultural products, thereby contributing to household income and community-level economic resilience.
- **Access to Marketing Channels:** Women's access to local and regional markets has been facilitated through the use of accessible marketing channels supported by digital technology. Simple yet effective tools, such as WhatsApp groups and Facebook posts managed by women entrepreneurs, have allowed for greater visibility and outreach of their products.

3. Political and Institutional Opportunities

- **Local Government Support:** The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria has implemented policies and initiatives aimed at supporting women in agriculture. These include the allocation of land and agricultural resources to women, thereby promoting their economic independence and strengthening their role in rural development (Durriya Women's Fund, 2023).
- **Increased Participation in Decision-Making:** Women's representation in local governance structures, including agricultural and municipal councils, has increased. This growing inclusion ensures that women's voices are heard in policymaking processes and that their specific needs within the agricultural sector are addressed.
- **Strengthening Women's Organizations:** Both local and international women-led organizations have expanded their efforts to support female farmers through capacity-building programs, access to financing, and advocacy for gender equality in agricultural policies and practices.

4. Environmental and Climate Opportunities

- **Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture:** There is a growing trend of women's participation in sustainable agriculture initiatives, focusing on the efficient use of natural resources. Techniques such as drip irrigation, crop rotation, and integrated soil management are being adopted to enhance productivity while conserving the environment.
- **Opportunities in Organic Farming:** The expansion of organic agriculture offers women the chance to enter niche markets that prioritize environmentally friendly and chemical-free products. This not only contributes to environmental preservation but also improves income generation for female farmers.
- **Engagement in Water Resource Management:** Women are increasingly involved in local water resource management programs, which aim to improve irrigation practices and ensure the long-term sustainability of water supplies. Their participation enhances community resilience to water scarcity and climate variability.
-

5. Technological Opportunities

- **Digital Marketing Platforms:** A growing number of women entrepreneurs are leveraging digital tools—particularly social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp—to promote and sell their agricultural products directly to consumers. This approach reduces reliance on intermediaries, increases profit margins, and expands market access.
- **Adoption of Renewable Energy:** The increasing availability of renewable energy sources, particularly solar power, offers significant advantages for women-led agricultural initiatives. Solar energy is being utilized to power irrigation systems and agricultural machinery, providing a cost-effective and sustainable solution for rural farming communities.

6. Empowerment and Leadership Opportunities

- **Capacity Building in Leadership:** A rising number of training programs and initiatives are aimed at strengthening women's leadership skills in the agricultural sector. These programs enhance their ability to participate in decision-making processes at both the community and institutional levels.
- **Policy Advocacy for Women's Rights:** Women's organizations, both local and international, are actively engaged in advocating for gender-sensitive agricultural policies. These efforts include calls for equal pay, equitable access to agricultural resources, and the protection of women's rights within rural economies. (Republic Magazine, 2022)

The opportunities available to enhance the women-led agricultural economy in North and East Syria are both substantial and diverse. However, seizing these opportunities necessitates coordinated efforts from local governments, international organizations, and civil society. By investing in education and training, improving access to resources, and promoting women's participation in decision-making processes, it is possible to empower women to fully realize their potential in the agricultural sector. This empowerment can significantly contribute to achieving sustainable development and fostering economic stability in the region.

Practical Framework

- **Questionnaire Form:**

Study Sample: The study sample was determined based on the following parameters:

- **Geographic Scope:** The survey was conducted in villages located in the southern countryside of Al-Hasakah Governorate, specifically in Al-Arisha and its surrounding areas.
- **Human Scope:** The total number of female participants included in the study was 40.
- **Temporal Scope:** Data collection and analysis were carried out during February and March 2025.

- **Presentation of Survey Results**

Section One: Personal Information

1. Age

Table (1): Distribution of Participants by Age

Age	Frequency	% Percent
30-20	14	% 35
40 – 31	23	% 57.5
Older than 40	3	% 7.5
Total	40	100

Table (1) shows that the majority of participants, at 57.5%, are aged between 30 and 40 years. 35% of the sample is between 20 and 30 years old, while the percentage of those over 40 years is significantly lower. This indicates that the study predominantly includes younger women.

2. Marital Status

Table (2): Distribution of Participants by Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	% Percent
Single	0	0
Married	33	82%
Divorced	2	5%
Widowed	5	13%
Total	40	100

Table (2) shows that the majority of participants, accounting for 82%, are married.

3: Educational Level

Table (3): Distribution of participants by educational level

Educational level	Frequency	% Percent
Primary school	6	15%
Intermediate school	17	42.5%
High school	17	42.5%
University level	0	0
Total	40	100

Table (3) shows that the percentage of participants with intermediate and secondary education is about 42%, while the percentage of those with primary education is only 15%, and the illiterate percentage is zero. This indicates that the responses pertain to educated individuals.

Section Two: Work and Economic Source

1. Nature of Work

Table (4): Distribution of participants by nature of work

Nature of Work	Frequency	% Percent
Housewife	4	10%
Farming	16	40%
Animal production	13	32.5%
Craft (sewing, pastries, food processing, etc.)	7	17.5%
Total	40	100

The table (4) shows that the percentage of women working in agriculture and animal husbandry collectively exceeds 70%, while the percentage of housewives is less than 10%.

2. Experience

Table (5): Distribution of Participants According to Work Experience

	Frequency	% Percent
Less than one year	2	5%
From 1 to 3 years	16	40%
More than 3 years	22	55%
Total	40	100

The table (5) shows that more than half of the participants have work experience of more than 3 years, which enhances their ability to effectively assess working conditions.

3. Analysis of Section Two Responses

- Do you rely on this work as your primary source of income?
 - Yes (Number: 27, Percentage: 67.5%)
 - No (Number: 13, Percentage: 32.5%)

- Are you the primary breadwinner of your family?
 - Yes (Number: 11, Percentage: 27.5%)
 - No (Number: 29, Percentage: 72.5%)
- Do you feel that your work contributes to improving your family's economic situation?
 - Yes (Number: 32, Percentage: 80%)
 - No (Number: 2, Percentage: 5%)
 - Sometimes (Number: 6, Percentage: 15%)

The responses suggest that the majority of participants (67.5%) rely on their work as their primary source of income. Additionally, while only 27.5% serve as the primary breadwinners in their families, a significant majority (80%) feel that their work positively impacts their families' economic situation.

Section Three: Challenges

1. Main Difficulties in Work

Table (6): Distribution of Participants According to Work Difficulties

	Frequency	% Percent
Lack of funding	3	7.5%
Marketing problems	14	35%
High costs	8	20%
Social restrictions	6	15%
Lack of training and skills	9	22.5%
Other	0	0
Total	40	100

The table (6) shows that marketing issues are the most prominent difficulties faced by the participants, followed by a lack of training and high costs.

2. Analysis of Section Three Responses

- Do you face discrimination or social barriers because of your work?
 - Yes (Number: 21, Percentage: 52%)
 - No (Number: 10, Percentage: 25%)
 - Sometimes (Number: 9, Percentage: 22.5%)
- Do you face difficulties in marketing your products?
 - Yes (Number: 29, Percentage: 72.5%)
 - No (Number: 4, Percentage: 10%)
 - Sometimes (Number: 7, Percentage: 17.5%)
- Do you face difficulties in managing time between work and home?
 - Yes (Number: 32, Percentage: 80%)
 - No (Number: 3, Percentage: 7.5%)
 - Sometimes (Number: 5, Percentage: 12.5%)

The responses indicate that more than half of the participants (52%) experience discrimination or social barriers due to their work. The majority (72.5%) also face

difficulties in marketing their products, and a significant number (80%) struggle with balancing work and home responsibilities.

Section Four: Opportunities and Analysis

- Do you receive any support or training from local or international organizations or institutions?
 - Yes (Number: 31, Percentage: 77.5%)
 - No (Number: 9, Percentage: 22.5%)
- If yes, what is the nature of this support?
 - Financial support (Number: 26)
 - Equipment provision (Number: 5)
 - Training (Number: 31)

The majority of participants (77.5%) receive support from humanitarian or international organizations, with training and financial assistance being the most common forms of support.

- What is the biggest challenge facing rural women in your area? The most frequently mentioned challenges by the participants included drought, rising fodder prices, weak agricultural technologies, balancing work and home responsibilities, childcare, and low income and poverty.
- Do you have suggestions to improve the situation of women working in agriculture or small businesses? The most common suggestions from participants were financial support, providing marketing facilities for agricultural products, supporting training on modern irrigation techniques, and providing assistance for maternal and child care.

✓ Results

The women-led agricultural economy plays a critical role in fostering both economic and social development in North and East Syria. Despite the significant challenges faced by women in this sector, numerous opportunities exist to economically empower them. Through the implementation of supportive policies, provision of funding, and enhancement of education and training programs, the role of women in agriculture can be reinforced, leading to greater contributions toward sustainable development in the region.

To achieve this, it is essential to expand support for women-led agricultural initiatives, broaden the scope of agricultural cooperatives, and create strategies to improve women's access to markets and agricultural resources. These efforts will not only strengthen their economic participation but also improve their social status in the long term. The key findings derived from this research are as follows:

- **Women as Key Actors in Agriculture:** Women in North and East Syria are a crucial element of the agricultural sector, playing a central role in ensuring food security and driving economic development.
- **Access to Education and Training:** Women face challenges in accessing agricultural education and modern training, which limits their capacity to enhance farm productivity and adopt more advanced farming techniques.
- **Social Restrictions:** Social norms and restrictions hinder women's mobility outside the home, preventing them from accessing markets, acquiring necessary agricultural inputs, or engaging in agricultural cooperatives.
- **Economic Barriers:** Women in the agricultural economy face significant economic challenges, including difficulties in marketing their products, a lack of training, and high operational costs.
- **Growing Opportunities for Empowerment:** There are increasing opportunities to enhance the role of women in North and East Syria. These include growing community awareness of the importance of women's economic participation, the development of policies and programs that support women in agriculture, and the increased activity of local and international organizations that provide training, financial support, and advocacy for women's rights.

✓ **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made to enhance the role of women in the agricultural sector in North and East Syria and support their economic empowerment:

- **Enhance Education and Training:** It is essential to provide targeted educational and training programs for women to improve their agricultural skills. These programs should focus on modern farming techniques, farm management, and marketing strategies to increase productivity and profitability.
- **Improve Access to Financing:** Establish financial programs specifically for women, including microloans and grants, to enable them to purchase necessary agricultural inputs, invest in farm development, and expand their businesses.
- **Enhance Women's Land Ownership:** Support the enactment and enforcement of laws that allow women to own agricultural land. Land ownership is a critical asset for women in agriculture, as it enhances their control over resources and economic independence.
- **Improve Infrastructure:** Rebuild and improve rural infrastructure, including roads and agricultural facilities, to facilitate better access to markets and reduce transportation costs for women farmers. This would help them reach broader markets and increase their income potential.
- **Strengthen Women's Cooperatives:** Encourage the establishment of women-led agricultural cooperatives. These cooperatives can provide women with better bargaining power in the market, facilitate access to shared resources, and enhance their collective capacity to negotiate for better prices and services.

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➤ **Appendix 1: Women from North and East Syria Contributing to the Women's Agricultural Economy in Various Professions**



A woman from the village of Al-Areesha works in food processing.



A woman from the village of Um Rukaybah has a small poultry project for egg production and selling broilers.



A woman from the village of Al-Areesha works in raising local chickens.



A woman from the village of Ajaja works in raising turkeys.

➤ **Appendix 2: Survey Form**

Scientific Research Survey – Responses will be used for research purposes only and will not be used for any other purpose.

Please check the box next to the selected answer.

1. Age:
 - 20-30
 - 31-40
 - Over 40
2. Marital Status:
 - Single
 - Married
 - Widowed
 - Divorced
3. Educational Level:
 - Primary
 - Intermediate
 - Secondary
 - University
4. What is your primary occupation?
 - Housewife
 - Agriculture
 - Animal production
 - Craft (e.g., sewing, pastries, food processing, etc.)
 - Other (Please specify): _____
5. How long have you been practicing this work?
 - Less than 1 year
 - 1-3 years
 - More than 3 years
6. Do you rely on this work as your primary source of income?
 - Yes
 - No
7. Are you the primary breadwinner for your household?
 - Yes
 - No
8. Do you feel that your work contributes to improving the economic situation of your household?
 - Yes
 - No
9. What are the main difficulties you face in your work?
(Select all that apply)
 - Lack of funding
 - Marketing problems
 - High costs
 - Lack of training and skills
 - Other (Please specify): _____
10. Do you face discrimination or social barriers due to your work?
 - Yes

- No
 - Sometimes
11. Do you face difficulties in marketing your products?
- Yes
 - No
 - Sometimes
12. Do you face difficulties in managing time between work and home?
- Yes
 - No
 - Sometimes
13. Do you receive any support or training from local or international organizations or institutions?
- Yes
 - No
14. If yes, what is the nature of this support? (You may select more than one option)
- Financial support
 - Provision of equipment
 - Training
15. What is the biggest challenge faced by rural women in your area?
16. Do you have any suggestions for improving the situation of women working in agriculture or small projects?



About **GAV**:

GAV for Relief and Development is a non-governmental, non-profit organization led by women's leadership, operating primarily in the northeastern regions of Syria. The organization also maintains a registration office in France. GAV is committed to fostering stability across various sectors, including education, food security, and health, through a variety of programs. These programs focus on providing education, building capacities, and enhancing women's participation in peace-building and stabilization activities.

Working closely with local communities, GAV supports cultural diversity, advocates against violence and extremism, and promotes shared peace and coexistence. The organization approaches these efforts from a feminist perspective, ensuring that the empowerment of women remains at the core of its mission.

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