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RESEARCH ARTICLE

CONTRIBUTIONS OF WOMEN IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT: CASE OF WOMEN'S GROUPS IN THE PREFECTURE OF KISSIDOUGOU, GUINEA

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Abstract

This work aims to determine the role that women play in the rural development process in the prefecture of Kissidougou. The activities took place in Kissidougou prefecture from July 16 to October 25, 2023. To better understand this study we adopted the following methodology: Consultation of executives, archives and documents and socio-economic surveys. To this end, our surveys focused on: 240 women surveyed using the direct interview method, including 168 women belonging to groups formed, i.e. 6 women per group and 72 women working individually. From the data collected we arrived at the following results:

1. The annual income of women from all activities combined amounts to 221,479,000 GNF or \$25,840 with a total expense of 177,064,570 GNF equivalent to \$20,659 or a net profitability of 25.08%;
2. The annual expenses of a female farmer increased from 385,200 GNF (\$45) to 700,600 GNF (\$81.8) or a variation of 82%, that of crafts 422,200 GNF (\$49.3) to 710,200 GNF (\$83) for a variation of 68% and those of traders from 643,400 GNF (\$75.1) to 979,100 GNF (\$114.23) for a variation of 52%;
3. A change in mentalities for development;
4. An increase in the purchasing power of women thanks to the increase in income and their strong application in family expenses (food, health care, schooling, clothing, housing, etc.), purchase of livestock, means travel and house construction.
5. Better management of the family budget and improvement of the conditions of members and non-members of groups.

However, it should be noted that despite the efforts made by women's groups for rural development, there is still a lot to do in the sense that the groups are so far confronted with certain problems which are among others:

1. Insufficiency of areas specific to women farmers, inputs, seeds and materials;
2. Insufficient infrastructure and craft equipment;

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3. Insufficient working capital and difficulty in selling finished products.
4. To remedy this problem, in the process of perpetuating the groups it is necessary to adopt the legislative, financial and administrative measures necessary to create an environment favorable to the entrepreneurial spirit of women and their participation in active life.

Based on these observations and the testimonies of some women interviewed, we can say that women play a leading role in direct or indirect rural development and in improving family living conditions.

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Introduction:-

The agricultural sector occupies an important place in the rural economy by contributing to job creation and guaranteeing the food security of the population. It is a convincing indicator which is demonstrated through its contribution to the gross domestic product and constitutes the basis of the rural economy. Thus, the first development policies in these regions are essentially based on the development of the agricultural sector which must generate sufficient income to allow rural populations decent living conditions (Nadia et al. 2021; Labiadth, 2011). Despite the importance of this sector, a remarkable decline in the agricultural workforce has been recorded in general, the number of female employees in the agricultural sector is experiencing substantial growth linked particularly to the intensification of agricultural activity (Bouzidi et al., 2011).

With women largely represented in the agricultural workforce around the world in general and in Guinea in particular, their empowerment is essential not only to the well-being of individuals, families and rural communities, but also to productivity general economic situation (UN Women, 2015). Many difficulties have hampered the conditions of women in rural areas as well as the means to improve their conditions and the opportunities available to strengthen their empowerment (FAO, 2017; Gaillard et al. 2018). In light of all of the above, it is important to remember that in the area of gender, all studies on the issue of poverty have established that women are the poorest of the poor, the most vulnerable, the least endowed with capacities and resources allowing them to assert their rights and interests in arbitration where they are involved alongside men (86% of the poor live in rural areas and are made up of 53.3% women according to the PRSP2). The finding reveals that the majority of these women in rural areas have not been educated. This situation risks getting worse and the illiteracy rate which has already reached more than 35% of the women surveyed compared to 32% in the case of Tunisia risks increasing (Gharbi, 2014); and this despite the fact that in Guinea, the importance of the role of promoting women in agricultural fields and in the modern sector of the economy has greatly increased to the point that we are talking about the feminization of certain subjects and strengthening the family economy. They are present throughout the agricultural production chain: from working in the fields and driving livestock to processing and preserving products for self-consumption or the weekly market. They take care of the maintenance of crops, the harvest of market garden products and the breeding of small ruminants (Chebbi, 2019) and form pillars of the achievement of profound economic, environmental and social changes necessary for sustainable development. However, limited access to credit, healthcare services and education is one of the many challenges they face, further aggravated by the global economic and food crises and climate change. When they are economically and socially empowered, women become powerful vectors of change. In rural areas of many developing countries, they largely contribute to supporting households and occupy a central place in agricultural activity. But their subordinate status compared to men often prevents them from realizing their full potential.

Women rarely have access to resources that would make their work more productive and relieve them of some of their hard work. Ultimately, it is not only women who are penalized, but also their families, their communities and the local economy. Rural women have many roles, and their responsibilities and knowledge are different from those of men. In the fields, they plant, weed, pick, harvest and take care of the livestock. In their home, they take care of the children and the household, prepare meals and manage household affairs. To earn a little extra money, many work as agricultural workers, cultivate a vegetable garden and sell vegetables, have a small business or a micro activity. In addition to their multiple tasks, they spend long hours carrying water and collecting firewood. In developing countries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, women typically work 12 hours more per week than men [FIDA, 2011].

It is in the logic of finding research solutions to the problems of development and poverty of rural women that this article is part.

The choice of the prefecture of Kissidougou in the Republic of Guinea is based on the one hand on the multiplicity of structures which ensure gender equity to reduce discrimination and promote positive relations between genders, inclusion and self-promotion of women and young people and on the other hand on the increasingly important emergence of women's groups which actively participate in the promotion of the local economy in this locality.

Materials:-

Presentation Of The Study Area

Located in the southern part of the country, the prefecture of Kissidougou is one of the four (4) prefectures that make up the governorate of Faranah in the Republic of Guinea.

Its capital is located 600 km from Conakry, the capital and 137 km from Faranah, the capital of the governorate.

Being the gateway to Forest Guinea, it covers an area of 8,872 km² and extends between 09° 17' and 10°27' West longitude and 09°50' and 09°44' North latitude.

From west to east, it extends over 117km, and from north to south over 100km.

It is limited:

- In the North by the prefectures of Faranah and Kouroussa;
- To the South by the prefectures of Gueckedou and Macenta;
- To the East by those of Kérouané and Kankan;
- To the West by the prefectures of Gueckedou and Faranah.

It is subdivided into twelve (12) sub-prefectures and one urban commune which are:

Albadariah, Banama, Bardou, Beindou, Fermessadou, Firawa, Gbangbadou, Kondiadou, Manfran, Sangardo, Yendè-Millimou and Yombiro.

Socio-economic study

Socio-economic activities in Kissidougou prefecture are multiple and varied and include:

Agriculture:

It represents the main activity of the prefecture. The agricultural population alone occupies 90% of the active population. Kissidougou prefecture is an agro-pastoral zone par excellence.

Agricultural products are subdivided into food crops intended for local consumption: RICE, Fonio, Corn, Cassava, Potato, Yam, taro, peanut: and industrial crops: coffee, palm kernel, banana, pineapple and peanut.

There are also large plantations of mango, tangerine, orange and kola trees.

Breeding:

This activity is little developed in the sub-prefecture. However, in rural areas, we can note the presence of cattle, goats, pigs, sheep and poultry.

Fishing:

It is artisanal and practiced in the Niandan river and its tributaries such as Dolé, Gbilindan, Konya as well as some southern rivers such as Kokou, Doffé and Wahou.

Hunting:

It is an activity that is practiced in all seasons using guns and the installation of traps where animals pass through.

Trade:

The trade is widespread throughout the sub-prefectures and sales are made in wholesale and semi-wholesale up to small businesses and by village window dressers.

The main place of exchange remains the weekly market which punctuates the life of the population, all the capitals of the CRD have important markets. The main commercial products are: rice, fonio, corn, cola, citrus fruits, coffee, tubers, etc., imported goods and handicrafts.

Tourism

The prefecture has many tourist sites due to its relief, its hydrography and its history.

Crafts:

This activity remains widely practiced both in the center and in the village and supports entire families: it brings together shoemakers, potters, weavers, dyers, blacksmiths, etc.

Communication channel:

The city of Kissidougou becoming a major crossroads due to its abundant agricultural production and the development of its trade requires significant means of communication.

Road traffic is constantly increasing, giving the city a certain economic interest through population movements and multiple socio-economic activities. The prefecture also has a non-functional airfield.

Methods:-

Goals

Main objective :

The general objective of this study is to determine the role that women play in the rural development process in the prefecture of Kissidougou.

Specific objectives :

Specifically, it aims for the following objectives:

1. Identify and count the main women's groups operating in the prefecture;
2. Know their functioning as well as their activities carried out in the local development process;
3. Identify the reasons that motivate women to organize themselves into groups;
4. Evaluate the impacts of these activities on improving the living conditions of women.

Methodology:-

To achieve this objective, the methodology adopted is as follows:

1. Making contact and consulting frames, archives, and documents.

It allowed us to better understand the study area and obtain information that helped us in choosing the farmer organizations to investigate. This preliminary investigation was carried out at two levels, namely:

- making contact with the staff of the DMR (Directorate of Micro Achievements): this allowed us to identify women's peasant organizations and the villages sheltering them;
- consultation of documents and archives: it allowed us to collect information relating to the different women's peasant organizations in the area, namely: their structure, their functioning and partnership with other organizations or institutes.

2. Socio-economic surveys

They began by developing survey sheets with members of women's groups, women working individually, resource people through sampling.

Table 1:- Distribution of the sample by district or CRD/Women's group.

N°	CRD/District	Groups visited			Group members			Total members
		Agriculture	Craftsmanship	Trade	Agriculture	Craftsmanship	Trade	
1	Beindou	3	1	0	18	6	0	24
2	Fermessadou	3	2	0	18	12	0	30
3	Gbangbadou	1	2	1	6	12	6	24
4	Kissidougou	4	6	3	24	36	18	78
5	Soriandou	2	0	0	12	0	0	12
Total		13	11	4	78	66	24	168

Table 2:- Distribution of sampling by CRD or district/women working individually.

N°	CRD/District	Agriculture	Craftsmanship	Trade	Total
1	Beindou	5	3	1	9
2	Fermessadou	6	1	2	9
3	Gbangbadou	5	2	2	9
4	Kissidougou centre	4	6	30	40
5	Soriandou	4	0	1	5
	TOTAL	24	12	36	72

Results:-

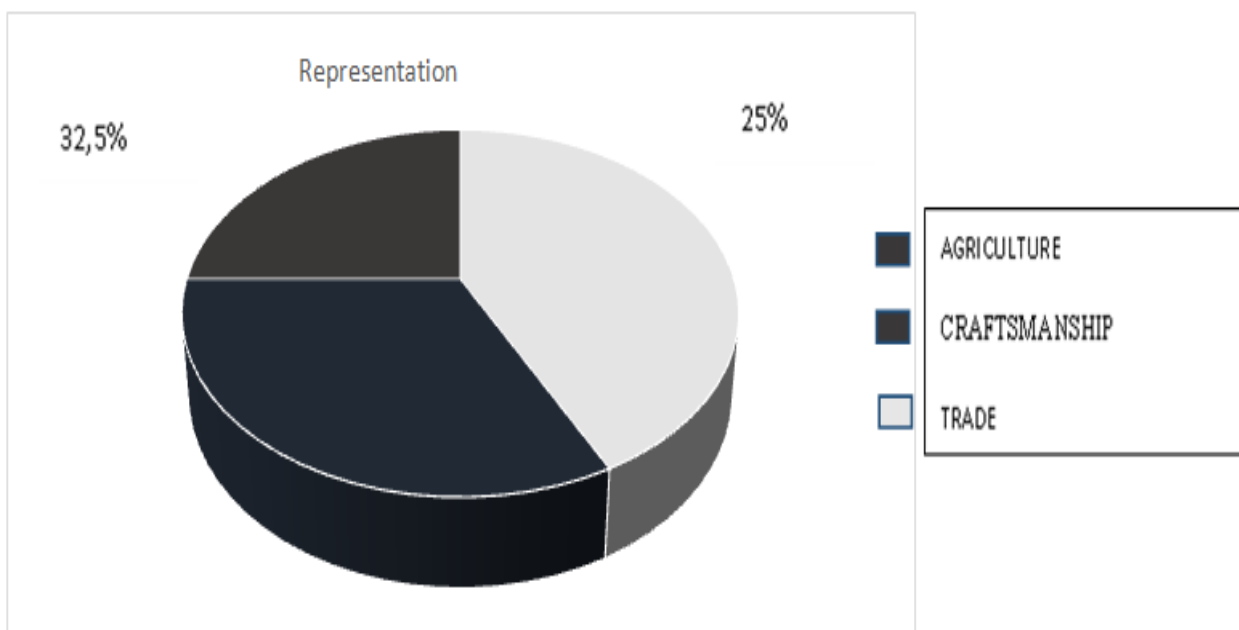
At the end of the research we arrived at the following results:

Analysis of women's activities

The number of women surveyed according to the sector of their activities is recorded in the table and graph (July-October 2023).

Table 3:- Distribution of women surveyed according to their activity.

N°	Activity	Number	Percentage (%)
1	Agriculture	102	42,50
2	Craftsmanship	78	32,50
3	Trade	60	25,00
Total		240	100

**Graph 1:-**Sector diagram of women surveyed according to the sector of their activities.

From this table and graph, we see that the main activities of the women surveyed remain agriculture, crafts and commerce. Agriculture remains the most dominant activity from the point of view of creating interest due to the importance that donors attach to this activity.

Table 4:- Situation of membership of the women surveyed according to their group.

N°	CRD/CU	DISTRICTS	GROUPS	NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF A GROUP/DISTRICT AND BY CRD	TOTAL WORKFORCE
1	Beindou	Beindou-centre	Malaya	10	83
		Broadou	Bekindi	15	

			Nouveauté Sindeye	15 43	
2	Fermessadou pompo	Bouyé	Benda GFEHP	14 35	140
		Fermessadou-Centre	Somgbai	23	
		Massakadou	La Paix Landaya	35 33	
3	Gbangbadou	Kénèma-Bamba	Benda Sabari	50 17	120
		Kissi-Yallankoro	Benda Lalando	45 08	
4	Kissidougou Centre	Kissidougou-Centre	AFAK	30	471
			Benkady	32	
Camawaly	62				
Dodofa	35				
Haha Keita	14				
La paix	32				
Les commerçantes de poissons	100				
Les couturières	43				
Malyando	11				
Nèma	55				
Sabougnouma I	27				
Sabougnouma II	20				
Sindeye	10				
		Soriandou Village	Landaya Sérieux	25 20	45
Total				859	859

From this table, we see a significant number of group members in Kissidougou prefecture (859 in total). The greatest number of group members was observed in the urban commune (471) due to the importance given to women in the urban commune to organize themselves into groups, to the multiplicity of groups, to the interests provided by the income-generating activities for these women and the smaller number of group members in Beindou due to the bad memory of the group members.

Table 5:- Situation of age groups of the women surveyed.

N°	Age groups	Workforce	Percentage (%)
1	20 to 30 years	60	25,00
2	31 to 45 years	90	37,50
3	46 to 60 years	50	20,83
4	Over 60 years old	40	16,67
TOTAL		240	100

From this table, it appears that out of a number of 240 women surveyed, 37.50% are aged between 31 and 45 years, which denotes a certain agility, determined motivation and obvious dynamism displayed by them because they are still economically active to carry out their activities without bitterness and to be predisposed to possibly follow some form of training. While only 16.67% are over 60 years old, this is justified by the fact that although economically active, they exercise a profession that does not require enough mobility, namely crafts, agriculture (market gardening).

Table 6:- Level of education of women.

N°	Level	Agriculture	Craftsmanship	Trade	Total
1	Illiterate	98	67	45	210
2	Primary	3	8	10	21
3	Secondary	1	3	5	9
Total		102	78	60	240

From this table, the majority of women surveyed are illiterate, i.e. 87.50%, this is due to the lack of literacy training for management and handling of management tools as part of the sustainability of their activities.

Table 7:- Method of obtaining land/Grouping.

N°	Land title	Agriculture	Craftsmanship	Trade	Total
1	Temporary	12	9	2	23
2	Final	1	2	0	3
3	Not having	0	0	2	2
Total		13	11	4	28

The analysis of this table shows us that among the 28 groups visited only one agricultural group and two (2) artisanal groups own permanent land, i.e. 11%; while 82% of groups work on borrowed land and 7% do not own land. Which shows that in agriculture women do not have direct access to land because the land is allocated to these women thanks to the support of their husband on the one hand and on the other hand these groups do not receive any subsidy allowing them to obtain land permanently.

Table 8:- Situation of the exhibition promotion of handicraft products/Grouping.

N°	Exposure	Agriculture	Craftsmanship	Trade	Total
1	Always participate	0	0	0	0
2	Participate sometimes	0	3	0	3
3	Do not participate	13	8	4	25
Total		13	11	4	28

The analysis of this table shows us that among the 28 groups visited only three (3) crafts declare having participated in the exhibition of their products on the market, i.e. 11%; while 89% have never participated in this exhibition. What emerges from this table is that artisanal activities are less practiced in rural areas within groups, due to lack of rapid sale of their finished products.

Through the distribution of the sample we noted that 36 out of 72 women working individually, i.e. 50%, practice commerce, which pushed us to an in-depth analysis allowing us to choose as a criterion: the husband's acceptance of the constraints of the displacement of his wife to better appreciate the difficulties of women.

Analysis of the impacts of activities on improving the conditions of women.

Table 9 : Situation of surface areas and average yields of women's groups in agriculture

N°	Speculation	Area in ha	Yield in Kg/ha	Production in Kg	Unit price	Recipe in GNF	GNF charges	Profit in GNF
1	RICE	3,75	1 808	6 780	3 500	23 730 000	20 096 545	3 633 455
2	BEAN	1	1 050	1 050	4 500	4 725 000	4 276 018	448 982
3	TOMATO	2	1 325	2 650	4 000	10 600 000	9 359 823	1 240 177
Total						39 055 000	33 732 386	5 322 614

Analysis of this table shows us that the cultivated areas and the yields obtained vary depending on the crops: the largest area is occupied by rice, i.e. 3.75 ha, which is explained by the place that this commodity occupies in the basic diet of the local population and the smallest surface area is occupied by beans which are considered in the area as a complementary food to other foods sometimes used as condiments. From a yield point of view, rice still occupies first place with 1,808kg/ha.

Table 10:- Economic analysis of some women's activities.

N°	Activity	Speculation	Production	Unit price	Recipe in GNF	GNF Charges	Recipe in GNF	Profitability in %
1	Craftsmanship	Fabric craft	300m	30 000	9 000 000	7 500 000	1 500 000	20
		Soap	16 800kg	1 680	28 224 000	20 906 667	7 317 333	35
		Palm oil	4 800 l	4 000	19 200 000	14 769 231	4 430 769	30
Sub Total 1			-	-	56 424 000	43 175 898	13 248 102	30,68
2	Trade	Banana	10 000kg	5 000	50 000	40 000 000	10 000	25

				000		000	
	Fish	9 600kg	6 000	57 600 000	46 526 656	11 073 344	23,8
	Peanut	4 600kg	4 000	18 400 000	13 629 630	4770370	35
Sub Total 2		-	-	126 000 000	100 156286	2509181 6	25,80
Grand Total		-	-	18242400 0	143332184	3909181 6	-

From this table we noted during our surveys, women artisans and traders recorded a total income of 182, 424,000 GNF, a total expense of 143, 332,184 GNF, a total profit of 39, 091,816 GNF or a net profitability of 27.27%. This same table shows us that the charges vary from one activity to another that the greatest charge is recorded in commercial activities with a total charge of 100, 156,286 GNF and the lowest in crafts with a charge of 43,175. 898 GNF. This is due to galloping inflation but also to the high tax on merchants' goods.

As for artisanal activities, it is due not only to the importance of the products produced, to the motivation of the artisans also and above all to planning in the execution of expenses in artisanal activities. These results allow us to classify crafts as the first with the greatest profitability, 30.68% compared to 25.80% for commercial activity.

Table 11:- Distribution of women according to their contribution to family life.

N°	Contributions	Agriculture	Craftsmanship	Trade
1	Food costs	81	60	53
2	Health care	60	65	52
3	School fees	55	60	54
4	Children's clothing	45	40	40
5	Habitat	5	3	10
6	House equipment	30	25	55

Analysis of this table shows us that there is an increase in the number of women who contribute in their homes to improving the living conditions of their respective families. This is due to the increase in income generated by these women in their activities and in the diversification of these income activities.

Table 12:- Evaluation of the annual contribution of women to family expenditure in GNF.

N°	Expenses	agriculture			Craftsmanship			Trade		
		before	with	Variation in %	Before	with	Variation in %	Before	With	Variation in %
1	Food costs	116.10 0	217.20 0	87	133.60 0	206.10 0	64	183.10 0	273.60 0	49
2	Tuition	39.100	47.300	21	53.200	84.300	58	59.400	89.600	51
3	Children's clothing	94.100	105.80 0	12	54.400	89.200	64	118.30 0	153.60 0	30
4	Health care	27.100	29.900	10	58.500	68.400	17	51.400	59.500	16
5	Habit	85.000	244.00 0	187	64.300	81.000	26	106.50 0	266.00 0	150
6	House equipment	23.200	56.400	137	58.200	181.20 0	211	124.70 0	136.80 0	10
Total		385.20 0	700.60 0	82	422.20 0	710.20 0	68	643.40 0	979.10 0	52

Analysis of this table shows us that there has been an increase in the purchasing power of women and their strong participation in family expenses thanks to the contribution of groups. The annual expenses of a female farmer increased from 385,200 GNF to 700,600 GNF, i.e. a variation of 80%, those of artisan women from 422,200 GNF to 710,200 GNF, i.e. a variation of 68%, and those of traders from 643,400 GNF to 979,100 GNF, i.e. a variation of 52%.

Evaluated Socio-Economic Impacts

1. Impact on family living conditions

According to our analysis, we note an improvement in the living conditions in the homes of the women surveyed thanks to the intervention of financial institutions, these interventions are based on a development philosophy which aims to promote the development of the power of poor women by helping to increase their capabilities, access to resources and the political power necessary to achieve it and maintain a satisfactory standard of living.

The contribution of MFIs has enabled women to meet family needs during lean periods through the women's group on the one hand and to improve the situation of all families.

Women's associations have enabled women to do a lot of work in the direct or indirect socio-economic development of Guinea in general and Kissidougou in particular by making savings in kind (cattle, small ruminants, poultry, etc.)

Our surveys reveal that the participation of women in rural development is appreciable through the strengthening of their capacity to manage the family budget.

The majority of women met recognize a positive change on all levels at their level because of the monetary availability generated by daily activities and their contribution to family well-being and rural development.

2. Impacts on the diversification of women's activities

Even if they represent a considerable labor force, rural women generally work for the household, they practice subsistence agriculture and the majority of women have the status of family helpers in their occupation. It therefore does not control the resources generated by crops. Losing on this front, they occupy themselves with rice growing activities, commercial market gardening and poorly developed artisanal processing from which they earn only meager income. These secondary activities stop as soon as the obligations call to the fields for work. With the advent of certain partners, the trend begins to change in favor of women who no longer expect to receive everything from their husbands, but fight to participate in the creation of family happiness.

They engage in several rice production activities, from market gardening to trade, including processing systems and businesses all on their own account.

This multi-activity that the groups carry out in the areas in no way without knowing the positive effects on the family and rural development because the women will be more concerned by their petty activities of the husband or the co-wife, without however saying that they will not carry out of their marital obligations. Participation in groups in political life as a sign of their emancipation (association, political party, means of transport, cell phone, business trips and visiting distant relatives, etc.) the groups provided valuable services to women, they helped them to work from their own means without absolutely depending on their spouses. These women are mostly married or widowed at an advanced age and would be more noticeable in solidarity groups; the organization of women into groups allowed a change in status (farmer to retailer, wholesaler, etc.) and the improvement of their living conditions: food, education of children, access to health care and clothing.

Intervention in resolving the social problems of their residential units and their partners is increasingly visible.

Conclusion:-

During this work, we can assess the movement for the emancipation of women in Guinea in general and those in the prefecture of Kissidougou in particular through the emergence of local women's groups in political life as the beginning of remarkable social changes. . This emergence, although it seems irreversible today, did not happen in a single day, as the content of most of the interviews proves.

The women's group in the prefecture of Kissidougou to defend their rights, for rural development is beginning to bear fruit and there is hope because the women's groups are recognized for their multiple efforts and have acquired their letter of nobility from the governing bodies. Local areas, notably the DMR.

The organization of women into groups has favored the diversification of sources of income through the promotion of income-generating activities. This has inevitably made it possible to obtain more conclusive results in improving the living conditions of populations in rural areas in general and that of women in particular.

Thus, among women farmers, the increase in production comes from the adoption of new cultivation techniques, the introduction of new varieties of seeds, etc., which resulted in the obtaining of a revenue of 39,055,000 GNF by the production campaign.

Women artisans and traders are delighted with their production and their working capital which allows them to diversify their activities and above all to increase the qualities of tradable products such as bananas, peanuts and artisanal products such as artisanal fabrics. , soap with a recipe of 56, 424,000 GNF or (\$6,583.01) for crafts and 126, 000,000 GNF equivalent to (\$14,700.5) for commerce, i.e. a total profitability of two activities of 27.27% .

The annual expenses of a female farmer increased from 385,200 GNF (\$45) to 700,600 GNF (\$81.8), that of artisan women from 422,200 GNF (\$49.3) to 710,200 GNF (\$83) and that of female traders from 643,400 GNF (\$75.1) to 979,100 GNF (\$114.23).

This state of affairs has made it possible to strengthen the contribution of women to rural development. A certain number of effects can be highlighted at the level of family budgets (cash-flow for consumption and family expenses: health, education, etc.) and the improvement of family relationships.

Consequently, the association of women in groups for their development proves necessary, but the interviews carried out with the groups during our investigations demonstrated that the latter are faced with certain difficulties linked to the promotion of rural women in Kissidougou, including among others:

1. Insufficiency of areas specific to women farmers, inputs, seeds and materials;
2. Insufficient infrastructure and artisanal equipment;
3. Insufficient working capital and difficulty in selling finished products.

Even though women have increased their decision-making power, particularly regarding purchases of household assets, and are consulted more often during the decision-making process, men still tend to have the last word in important decisions.

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