

# Role of Agriculture in Women's Economic Development: A Case Study of Pakistan

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**Abstract:** Feminization of agriculture has been occurred in Pakistan and women's are participating in agriculture and its allied fields. In rural areas of Pakistan, women's living conditions are not up to the mark. For the betterment of living standard, women's are working in agriculture on daily wages. Agriculture not only in Pakistan but all over the world has become a tool for women's economic development. Present study explores the role of agriculture in women's economic development. A sample of 140 female respondents was selected through multistage sampling technique. Questionnaire was used for data collection. The collected data were analyzed by using SPSS and descriptive statistical technique. Results of the study reveals that majority of the respondents were performing agricultural activities, while rural women were also involved in stitching of clothes (40%), teaching (18%), spinning (5%), working in textile (3%) and LHW (7.1%). It was found that their income had a significant impact on their socio-economic status. A majority i.e. 60.7 percent of them were performing economic activities willingly. About 5.7 percent of the respondents had thinking 'to a great extent' that their present salary is according to their work, while a large majority i.e. 77.9 percent of them had thinking 'to some extent' that their present salary is according to their work. A significant majority i.e. 78.6 percent of the respondents were satisfied as a working woman.

**Keywords:** Agriculture, Women, Income, Rural, Pakistan

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## 1. Introduction

Pakistan is an agrarian country and agriculture is the basic pillar of the economy of the state. Rural women play a vigorous role in several fields of life. A conventional farm woman is a leading participant to maintain life activities equally at home and farm. Especially in agriculture farming they play main role. Moreover, their participation in community development program, upholding social relations, they also fulfill household responsibilities by cooking, cleaning of the house, washing of clothes, upbringing the children, caring of the elderly, fetching of water as well as fuel (Siddique et al., 2009).

Income is the very important part for women social welfare as the uplift standard Mondal *et al.*, (2009). Development programs provide sources for earning money. Rural women are engaged in different agriculture activities to earn money. Through microcredit scheme women can play a vital role in raising their families socially and economically

(Jarrah *et al.*, (2001).

Availability of financial assistance is very significant for any income generating activity. In Pakistan there are two sectors that mainly provide financial assistance, the informal sector and the formal sector. In informal sector women are dependent on financial support of local money lenders on high interest rate (Hudon 2007 and Kabeer 2001). Livestock play an important role in the development. Livestock give half of the value of global agriculture outputs. Livestock is major source of food in our country. There is huge increase in livestock products price. Livestock is the essential part of the rural as well as the country development. In rural areas it contributes to rural employment, livelihoods and poverty reduction. More than 70% of rural people own livestock. It provides a higher share of household income to poor and landless families especially for women. Demand for livestock products is expected to double in developing countries in the next twenty years, which will make the fastest growing agriculture sector (Miller, 2001).

Women are engaged in variety of agricultural operations

all over the world. According to an estimate, women produce more than 50.0% of the world food (Prakash, 2003). Their contribution in agricultural labour force is higher in developing countries as compared to developed one (FAO, 2010). Women are actively involved in various agricultural activities but their contribution varies from country to country and regions to region (Mwange, 2004). They also work along with men in livestock production and management activities (Ishani, 2004).

## 2. Statement of the Problem

In Pakistan, women's social and economic development is not only an issue about equalizing women with men but rather an issue of Pakistan's socio-economic development. Equality and equity between men and women is an academic issue but more important is the ground reality which says that nearly half of the population is lagging behind in all walks of life because opportunities of access to education, health-care, and choice of profession for women are almost negligible and the discrimination on the basis of sex has proved counterproductive. Gender differences in labor force participation have complicated labor market issues globally. One of the main factors in developmental differences among different countries can be explained by the degree of female participation in labor force. Pakistan where more than half population of females participate in labor markets, are restricted by many socio-political concerns. Due to lower participation in income generating activities, females are usually neglected for the provision of their basic rights. The negligence of such a huge proportion of population leads to poor state of human resource by lowering labor productivity and incomes. Many social scientists believe that poverty in developing countries could be coped with investment on women development and their empowerment. Faisalabad is an industrial city; agriculture could not contribute towards poverty alleviation. Most of the females were engaged in income generating activities i.e. agriculture and handicraft and working at industries. In this regards participation of the women in income generating activities could be an effective tool to reduce poverty and hunger, reduce violence, improve child nutrition and ensure access to better health and education facilities.

## 3. Methodology

Methodological techniques are very important for analyzing sociological problems empirically. Sound methodology is vitally important to establish chain for knowledge and empirical verification of hypothesis. The purpose of the research is to explain various tools to be employed for conducting the study. The scientific methodology is a system of explicit rules and procedures upon which research is based and against which claims for knowledge are evaluated (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1992). Research tools and techniques differ from discipline to discipline and researchers also have specific biases in research.

### 3.1. Sampling Technique and Sample Size

It is impossible and very expensive to collect data from all the units for analysis, so a reasonable sample was selected from the entire population. Multistage sampling technique was applied for data collection. At the first stage one town (Jinnah Town) was selected from the four towns through simple random sampling technique. At the second stage two union councils namely UC # 153 and UC # 154 were selected through simple random sampling technique. At the third stage 4 villages (two from each UC) i.e. Chak No. 71/JB & 73/JB from UC 153 and Chak No. 74/JB and 76/JB from UC No. 154 were selected by using simple random sampling technique. At the last stage a sample of 140 female's respondents according to the proportion of the population of the village through snow ball sampling technique were selected.

### 3.2. Data Collection Tool

A well-designed interview schedule was used as a tool for data collection. In interview schedule both open ended and close ended questions were used.

### 3.3. Statistical Analysis

#### Percentage

In order to bring the data into comparable form, percentages of various categories of data were worked out in the present study. The percentages were calculated by following formula:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{F}{N} \times 100$$

Where

F = Frequency

N = Total number

## 4. Results and Discussions

Uni-variate analysis was performed on the collected data which deals with the analysis of the respondents' socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, participation in economic activities and the impact of their income.

*Table 1. Distribution of the respondents according to their age.*

Age (in years)	Frequency	Percentage
15-25	21	15.0
26-35	47	33.6
36 and above	72	51.4
Total	140	100.0

Table 1 reveals that 15.0 percent of the respondents had 15-25 years of age, while about one-third i.e. 33.6 percent of the respondents had 26-35 years of age and little more than a half i.e. 51.4 percent of the respondents had 36 and above years of age. Similar age composition was found by Govt. of Pakistan (2011), about 17.22% young population of Pakistan belonged to age group (20-24) and 37.3% population

belonged to age group (25-34) and 46.95% population of Pakistan had 35 and above age.

**Table 2.** Distribution of the respondents according to their education.

Education	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	46	32.9
Primary-Middle	24	17.1
Matric	18	12.9
Intermediate	16	11.4
Graduation and above	36	25.7
Total	140	100.0

**Table 3.** Distribution of the respondents according to the reasons for joining this profession.

Reasons	To a great extent		To some extent		Not at all		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
To increase the family income	131	93.6	0.0	0.0	9	6.4	140.0	100.0
Spend the time	43	30.7	24	17.1	73	52.1	140.0	100.0
Achieve higher standard of living	80	57.1	6	4.3	54	38.6	140.0	100.0
Empower yourself	68	48.6	11	7.9	61	43.6	140.0	100.0
Give your children better education	71	64.0	13	11.7	27	24.3	111	100.0
Poverty	87	62.1	19	13.6	34	24.3	140.0	100.0
Forced by circumstances	67	47.9	21	15.0	52	37.1	140.0	100.0
Family's occupation	40	28.6	19	13.6	81	57.9	140.0	100.0
Any other	2	1.4	6	4.3	132	94.3	140.0	100.0

Table 3 presents the reasons of joining this profession. A huge majority i.e. 93.6 percent of the respondents were performing this economic activity 'to a great extent' to increase the family income, while only 6.4 percent of them did not join this activity to increase the family income.

Slightly less than one-third i.e. 30.7 percent of the respondents joined this activity for spending the time 'to a great extent', while 17.1 percent of them joined this activity to some extent for spending the time and 52.0 percent of the respondents did not join this economic activity for spending the time. A majority i.e. 57.1 percent of the respondents joined this economic activity to achieve higher standard of living 'to a great extent', while 4.3 percent of them join this activity to some extent for achieving higher standard of living and 38.6 percent of the respondents did not join this economic activity for achieving higher standard of living. A major proportion i.e. 48.6 percent of the respondents joined this economic activity to empower themselves 'to a great extent', while 7.9 percent of them joined this activity to some extent to empower themselves and 43.6 percent of the respondents did not join this economic activity to empower themselves. A majority i.e. 64.0 percent of the respondents joined this economic activity to give their children better education 'to a great extent'; while 11.7 percent of them joined this activity to some extent to give their children better education and about one-fourth i.e. 24.3 percent of the respondents did not join this economic activity to give their children better education. A majority i.e. 62.1 percent of the respondents joined this economic activity due to poverty 'to a great extent'; while 13.6 percent of them joined this activity to some extent due to poverty and about one-fourth i.e. 24.3 percent of the respondents did not join this economic activity due to poverty. A major proportion i.e. 47.9 percent of the

Table 2 reflects that about one-third i.e. 32.9 percent of the respondents were illiterate, while 17.1 percent of the respondents had education primary to middle level, 12.9 percent of them were matriculated, 11.4 percent of them were intermediate and about one-fourth i.e. 25.7 percent of the respondents had graduation and above level of education. Similar literacy rate were found by Govt. of Pakistan (2011). Govt. of Pakistan were noted that the overall literacy rate (age 10 years and above) is 57.7 percent (69.5 percent for male and 45.2 percent for female) compared to 57.4 percent (69.3 percent for male and 44.7 percent for female) for 2008-09.

respondents joined this economic activity due to circumstances 'to a great extent', while 15.0 percent of them joined this activity to some extent due to circumstances and 37.1 percent of the respondents did not join this economic activity due to circumstances. About 28.6 percent of the respondents joined this economic activity due to their family occupation 'to a great extent'; while 13.6 percent of them joined this activity to some extent due to family occupation and 57.9 percent of the respondents did not join this economic activity due to their family occupation. Only 1.4 percent of the respondents joined this economic activity due to any other reasons 'to a great extent', while 4.3 percent of them joined this activity to some extent due to any others and 94.3 percent of the respondents did not join this economic activity due to any others reasons.

**Table 4.** Distribution of the respondents according to their thinking that women play a vital role in raising their family socially and economically.

Thinking that women play a vital role in raising their family socially and economically.	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	90	64.3
No	50	35.7
Total	140	100.0

Table 4 indicates that a majority i.e. 64.3 percent of the respondents had thinking that women play a vital role in raising their family, socially and economically, while 35.7 percent of them had no thinking that women play a vital role in raising their family, socially and economically. Jariah *et al.*, (2001) also noted that women can play a vital role in raising their families socially and economically

## 5. Conclusion

Income is the very important part for women's social welfare. Development programs provide sources for earning money. Rural women are engaged in different agriculture activities to earn money. Pakistan is an agrarian country and agriculture is the basic pillar of the economy of the state. Rural women play a vigorous role in several fields of life. The Village women of Pakistan are the part of livestock activities. Women participation in different types of activities like milking, watering, cleaning and caring of animals, feeding and cleaning of sheds. Women are also involved in other economic activities, i.e. stitching, embroidery, handicraft making, working in textiles etc. Women's status can be improved by making them 'earning' family members.

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