

AN ASSESSMENT OF FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES IN AGRICULTURE SECTOR IN RURAL AREAS OF DISTRICT SIALKOT

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ABSTRACT

Pakistan is an agricultural country and agriculture is the mainstay of the economy. Rural women play a vital role in various arenas of life. An ordinary farm woman is the main player to sustain life activities both at home and farm. They have active role in agriculture farming. In addition to their involvement in community development activities and maintaining social relations, they also work in domestic chores by taking care of cooking, cleaning of housing, washing of clothes caring of children/elderly and fetching of water and fuel. Women often spend more time to these tasks than men do. The main objective of the present study is to assess the participation of rural women in income generating activities in agricultural sector. A sample of 200 was selected by using convenient sampling technique in the rural areas of Tehsil Daska, District Sialkot. Two villages were selected randomly from one Union Council. The data were analyzed through convenient sampling technique. Main findings show that majority of the respondents were engaged in vegetable picking, animal caring etc. activities. Results show that majority of the respondents were earning Rs. 1501-2000 per month. A huge majority of the respondents worked outside the home and were satisfied with the working condition over there. It is suggested that rural women should be provided time and energy-saving technology and technical know-how to help ease their workload, especially, in livestock production, gardening, post-harvest activities and food processing.

Key words: agriculture community development, convenient sampling technique, gardening, post harvest activities.

INTRODUCTION

A woman plays a vital role in building the society on healthier and stronger foundations. Most of the women in rural areas have to bear double burden of domestic and outside work. They are the first to rise and last to go to bed. They wake up before sun rise, prepare breakfast, wash the utensils and clean the house before moving to attend their outside work especially at family farms. Women engaged in work when other members are enjoying rest on bed (Gupta and Gupta, 1987). Although the conditions of women in urban areas are better than those of the rural women, yet the old traditions and religious restraints have hindered the independent and free movement of the women. In spite of unfavorable and strict cultural norms and values some women have done great job in Pakistani society. Pakistan is the first country in the Muslim world that has elected a woman as its prime minister twice (Sharif, 2002).

Rural women spend much time every day on agricultural and domestic tasks, with little time for rest or recreation. As paid or unpaid labour, women may spend up to 19 hours a day performing essential chores such as sowing, weeding, harvesting, animal husbandry, cleaning, fetching water and firewood, baking, cooking, sewing, child rearing. In many countries women are often paid two-thirds or even half of the wages earned by men for the same task (FAO, 1995).

Agricultural activities are the most important source of income for rural households in the region and make up 70 percent of total household income. Within this category the most important source of income is crop production. The remaining 30 percent of the total household income originates from non-agricultural activities. However, only around 18 percent of the households gain income from the latter activities. In contrast, 96 percent participate in agricultural activities (Gronau, 1973).

The present study was planned with the objectives: To find out the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents, to assess the female participation in income generating activities, to study the problems of women who participate in the income generating activities in agriculture and to suggest measures to improve the female role in income generating activities.

Theoretical framework: In Income Generating Theory, it is expressed that women often adopt new town-based activities to generate income. The theory argues that selected women are involved in the sale of milk, based on pastoral production; the collection and sale of firewood, which may be environmentally unsustainable; and income generation through small-scale trading, which has become increasingly important as it has increased market integration in northern Kenya (Nduma *et al.*, 2001).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The main objective of methodology is to explain various tools and techniques employed for a data collection, analysis and interpretation of data related to research problem (Young, 1949). A sample of 200 respondents was interviewed by using convenient sampling technique in rural areas of Tehsil Daska District Sialkot. Two villages were selected randomly from one Union Council. The data were analyzed by using the chi-square test. A pre-tested questionnaire was used for interviewing the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Distribution of the respondents according to their age, income and family income

Age(years)	Freq.	%age
Up to 35	60	30.0
36-45	103	51.5
46+	37	18.5
Total	200	100.0
Income of the respondents (Rs.)		
Up to 1500	61	30.5
1501-2000	114	57.0
2001 and above	25	12.5
Total	200	100.0
Family income of the respondents (Rs.)		
Up to 5000	56	28.0
5001-10000	113	56.5
10001 and above	31	15.5
Total	200	100.0

Age was considered as the number of completed years lived by the respondents at the time of interview (Newell, 1986). Table 1 shows that 30 percent of the respondents belonged to age group up to 35 years, while about half (51.5 percent) of the respondents fall in age group of 36-45 years and remaining 18.5 percent of them were 46 years and above.

Income of respondents defined as the remuneration received periodically for work or service performed by man/woman (Peppenocir, 1977.) The table under discussion also shows that 30.5 percent of the respondents were earning up to Rs. 1500, while majority of the respondents (57 percent) were earning Rs. 1501-2000 monthly from their economic activities.

Results further reveal that 28 percent of the respondents' family had monthly income up to Rs. 5000, while majority of the respondents' family (56.5 percent) had Rs. 5001-10000 and 15.5 percent of them had Rs. 10001 and above monthly family income.

Table 2 reveals that majority (71 percent) of the respondents were doing work to increase their family

income, while 4 percent were doing job to kill time and about one-fourth of the respondents (25 percent) were working to achieve higher standard of living.

Table 2. Distribution of the respondents according to the work and spending income

Purpose of their work	Freq.	%age
To increase the family income	142	71.0
To spend time	8	4.0
To achieve higher standard of living	50	25.0
Total	200	100.0
Respondents feeling about their work		
Feel honored	163	81.5
Feel nothing	37	18.5
Total	200	100.0
Spend of their income		
Causal requirements	174	87.0
Save	14	7.0
For personal use	12	6.0
Total	200	100.0

Results reflect that majority (81.5) percent of the respondents were feeling of honor due to their work, while 18.5 percent of the respondents had not reported any sort of feeling about their work. Data further depicts that majority of the respondents (87 %) were spending their income for family requirements, while 7 percent of the respondents were saving their income, only 6 percent of the respondents used their income for personal requirements.

Table 3 indicates that 60 percent of the respondents agreed to a great extent with the statement "women should always share economic burden of the family in all circumstances", while 37 percent agreed to some extent. About one-fourth of the respondents (24.5 percent) were agreed to a great extent with the statement "the female employment affects the socio-economic status of the family positively", while 53.5 percent were agreed to some extent and 21 percent of them had not at all knowledge about this statement. About one-third (32.5) percent of the respondents were agreed to a great extent with the statement "working women have better status in their family", while 45.0 percent were agreed to some extent and 22.5 percent of them were disagreed with the statement.

Majority (62.5 percent) of the respondents were reported to a great extent with the statement that "working women play better role as compared to unemployed females in the developmental activities of the country", while 34.5 percent were to some extent and 13 percent were disagreed on this statement. Majority (67 percent) of the respondents were agreed to a great extent "Women have to face lot of criticism when they go out of home for work" and 33 percent of them were disagreed.

Table 3. Distribution of the respondents according to their opinion about the different statements.

N = 200

Statements	To a great extent	To some extent	Not at all	Total
Women should always share economic burden on the family with family members in all circumstances	60.0	37.0	3.0	100
The female employment affects the socio-economic status of the family positively	24.5	53.5	21.0	100
Working women have better status in their family	32.5	45.0	22.5	100
Working women play better role as compared to unemployed females in the developmental activities of the country	62.5	34.5	3.0	100
Women have to face lot of criticism when she goes out of home for work	67.0	33.0	0	100

TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

The chi-square test was applied to see the association between variables.

Hypothesis 1: Young working women had knowledge that the technical guidance can improve the quality of their work.

The chi-square value shows a highly significant association between age of the respondent and their opinion that technical guidance can improve the quality of their work. The gamma value shows a strong negative

Table 4. Age and opinion of the respondents about technical guidance and quality of work

Age of the respondents	Respondents' opinion that technical guidance can improve the quality of your work		Total
	No	Yes	
Up to 35		100.0(60)	100.0(60)
36-45	3.9(4)	96.1(99)	100.0(103)
46+	54.1(20)	45.9(17)	100.0(37)
Total	12.0(24)	88.0(176)	100.0(200)

$\chi^2 = 76.57$ Significance = 0.000** Gamma = -0.961

relationship between the variables. Data visibly shows that young women (upto 35) had more knowledge about the technical guidance can improve the quality of their work. So the hypothesis "Young working women had knowledge that the technical guidance can improve the quality of their work" is accepted.

Hypothesis 2: Low income working women will be requiring technical guidance.

Table 5. Income and opinion of the respondents about technical guidance and quality of work

Income of the respondents	Respondents' opinion that technical guidance can improve the quality of work		Total
	No	Yes	
Up to 1500	0.0(0)	100.0(61)	100.0(61)
1501-2000	17.5(20)	82.5(94)	100.0(114)
2001 and above	16.0(4)	84.0(21)	100.0(25)
Total	12.0(24)	88.0(176)	100.0(200)

$\chi^2 = 21.01$ Significance = .002** Gamma = -0.628

The chi-square value shows a highly significant association between income of the respondent and their opinion that technical guidance can improve the quality of their work. The gamma value shows a strong negative relationship between the variables. Data noticeably shows that low income women (upto 1500) had opinion that the technical guidance can improve the quality of their work. So the hypothesis "low income working women will be requiring technical guidance" is accepted.

Conclusions: Pakistan is an agricultural country and agriculture is the mainstay of the economy. Rural women play a vital role in agriculture. It was concluded that majority of the selected working women were engaged in vegetable picking, animal caring etc. activities, and they were earning Rs. 1501-2000. It was also found that huge majority of the respondents worked outside the home, all of the women who worked at outside the home were satisfied with the working condition. Majority of the working women were doing work to increase their family income and facing problem to some extent in looking after their children and household chores. Majority of the respondents opinion that the working women play better role as compared to unemployed females in the developmental activities of the country and they have to face lot of criticism when she goes out of home for work. It was suggested that the women should always share economic burden of their family with other family

members in all circumstances. Rural women should be provided technical training, especially, in various fields outside the traditional agricultural sector, such as agro-industry, commerce, manufacturing and services. This will increase their farm production ultimately increasing their income and family prosperity.

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