

## Gender Participation in Crop Production Activities

AQEELA SAGHIR<sup>1</sup>, MUHAMMAD ZAKARIA YOUSUF HASSAN AND ASIF JAVED<sup>†</sup>

*Department of Agricultural Extension, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad–38040, Pakistan  
University College of Agriculture, Rawalakot. Azad Jammu and Kashmir*

<sup>1</sup>Corresponding author's e-mail: [aqeela\\_sagher@yahoo.com](mailto:aqeela_sagher@yahoo.com)

### ABSTRACT

The present study was designed to investigate the involvement of rural women in crop production activities. For this purpose, 120 respondents from district Attock already engaged in food security activities were randomly selected. Data were collected through a pre-tested interview schedule and then analyzed through SPSS. The study results indicated that rural women were involved in food production activities such as wheat and vegetable production on the family farms. They were also actively involved in food storage and security related activities such as cleaning of wheat for milling, cleaning of store rooms etc. This research study highlighted the need to further explore their access to non-formal educational resources concerning agriculture and home economics with special reference to food production, and storage.

**Key Words:** Gender; Participation; Crop production; Pakistan

### INTRODUCTION

Crop production is the main contributor (23.3% in GDP) to Pakistan's economy which comprises on major and minor crops, vegetable and fruit production (Govt. of Pakistan, 2004). Crop production is a gender activity, participated by both male and female. In some cases the rural female participation rate is much high (79.4%) as compared to rural men (60.8%) (UNDP, 1997). The sex-segregated data for Pakistan is insufficient while Pakistani women play a major role in agricultural production, livestock raising, and cottage industries (Rasheed, 2004). Women participate in crop production activities like seed cleaning, wheat, maize and vegetable production operations. As reported by UNDP (1997), the rural female participation rate in agriculture and livestock is higher (79.4%) as compared to rural men (60.8%). But, the women work is not considered as paid work (FAO, 1998). Only 10% women have access to credit and loan facility. Two third of the one billion of illiterate persons in the world are women and girls, and only 5% extension services address to women. Such trainings are mainly on household tasks for women and not on professional crop production activities (FAO, 2003). For solving problems faced by women in crop production activities, care is neither considered by men nor by the government. Women are also unaware of most of the advanced crop production activities and technologies due to training facilities and lack of resources. If some trainings are organized by same agencies, then rural females are not permitted to join by the male members due to sex discriminatory society (World Bank, 2001). Their needs, interests, and constraints are not reflected in policy-making. They also have limited access to benefits of research and innovations (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001). BLCC (2004) reported that despite food deficiency within a family, females (mother, daughters, wives, sisters) have least access to recommended diet as compared to males (father, brother, husband, son) because they are considered

the earning hands and due to invisible nature of work, women are uncountable and eat extra food after eating of males. They take their food at minimum protein level causing different diseases much higher participation in labour work and in all other spheres of life (UNDP, 2004). There is very limited information available about the role of rural women regarding the participation in various food security activities. The present project was, therefore, planned to explore the rural women participation in crop production activities.

### METHODOLOGY

The universe of the present study was District Attock (Pakistan) out of which two Union Councils (a unit higher than village) namely Jung and Kisana were selected through simple random sampling technique. From each selected Union Council, 5 villages were selected randomly. For each village, a list of females who were engaged in crop production activities was prepared. After making the list, 12 females from each village were selected through simple random sampling procedure. Thus for the present study a total of 120 respondents were selected. The data were collected with the help of pre-tested and validated interview schedule. The data thus collected were analyzed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After analysis of the data these were arranged in the form of tables. The data regarding demographic characteristics of the respondents such as age, education, occupation of the family head and land holding of the family head are presented in Table I.

Above data show that 55.0% of the interviewed females were in the age group of 30–44 years, followed by 26.7% and 18.3% of them belonged to age groups of 45–59 years and 15–29 years respectively. The mean age of the respondents was 37.43 years with 9.088 years standard

deviation. The above research findings are partially in line with those of Chaudhry (2004) who found that 44.2% of the respondents were of the age group of 26-35 years, while 44.8% and 16.0% of the respondents were of the age of 36 years and above. In case of education level, majority (77.5%) of the respondents was illiterate, followed by 19.2% and 2.5% of the respondents who were primary and matriculate. respectively. Only 0.8% was middle passed. The present research findings coincide with the findings of Rasheed (2004) who found that 66.7% of the respondents were illiterate, whereas 20% were primary and 10% were matriculates. Regarding family heads' occupation all of the respondents reported agriculture (crop and livestock sector) as their family heads' occupation. Other livelihood strategies were labourer, govt. servant and private servant. The above study findings coincide with the study of Atta (2000) who found that 52.8% of the respondents were agriculturists; whereas, 18.5 and 17.9% were businessmen and laborers. In case of land holdings of the family it was depicted that an overwhelming majority (98.3 & 100.0%) of the respondents had owned and rented land holding up to 25 acres of land i-e small landholders. Only 1.7% of the respondents reported that their families owned 25 or above

**Table I. Distribution of the respondents according to demographic characteristics**

Factor	Category	No.	%	Mean	SD
Age(years)	15-29	22	18.3	37.43	9.088
	30-44	66	55.0		
	45-59	32	26.7		
Education	Illiterate	93	77.5	1.27	0.621
	Primary	23	19.2		
	Middle	1	0.8		
	Metric	3	2.5		
<b>Occupation of the family head</b>					
	Agriculture	120	100	1.03	0.406
	Private servant	6	5.0	0.5	0.218
	Labourer	39	32.5	0.325	0.472
	Govt. servant	11	9.2	0.09	0.281
<b>Land holding</b>					
(Acres)	Small (up to 25)	118	98.3	25.62	69.45
	Large(above 25)	2	1.7	9.31	18.92

**Table II. Distribution of the respondents according to their activities related to crop production**

Activity	Always		Rarely		Never		Mean	SD
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Wheat harvesting	85	70.8	27	22.5	8	6.7	1.64	0.605
Wheat binding	84	70.0	26	21.7	10	8.3	1.62	0.638
Seed cleaning	116	96.7	4	3.3	0	0.0	1.97	0.180
Maize husking	38	31.7	28	23.0	54	45.0	0.87	0.869
Irrigating vegetable	75	62.5	28	23.3	17	14.2	1.48	0.733
Wheat threshing	84	70.0	25	20.8	11	9.2	1.61	0.652
Vegetable production for domestic use	78	65.0	25	20.8	17	14.2	1.51	0.733
Vegetable picking	76	63.3	27	22.5	17	14.2	1.49	0.733
Vegetable pest management	72	60.0	28	23.3	20	16.7	1.43	0.764
Applying the fertilizer to vegetables	70	58.3	30	25.0	20	16.7	1.42	0.762
Fruit management	2	1.7	9	7.5	109	90.8	0.11	0.362
Fruit picking	4	3.3	116	96.7	0	0.0	0.11	0.362
Packing of fruits	1	0.8	11	9.2	108	90	0.11	0.338

n=120 Always=2 Rarely=1 Never=0

acres of land i.e. large land holders. In connection with above study it is worth discussion that Rushton *et al.* (1996) had conducted a research study entitled "the changing role of cattle in the mixed farming systems around Bangalore, India" and found that in cattle-owing farms only 3.3% of farmers were with small-landholdings. Whereas the present study in Pakistan indicates that the majority of the farm families had small landholding.

The female respondents were asked to give their response on a Likert scale (never=0; rarely=1 and always=2) regarding their involvement in activities related to crop production. The data regarding this aspect are presented in Table II as given below.

The major activities related to crop, vegetable and fruit production performed by women were seed cleaning; binding and threshing; and vegetable production including irrigation, pest management and picking of vegetables (mean>1.40). However maize husking and fruit related activities were performed by them rarely (mean<0.87). Ishaq (1998) had concluded that 88 to 33% of the female respondents participated in agricultural activities like seed preparation (88%), drying (84.9%), harvesting (84.7%), weeding (82.0%), sowing (78.0%), binding (76.0%) sealing (73.3%), storage (72.0%), spreading chemical (43.3%), and selling (33.3%). According to him respondents were involved in farming activities mostly in seed preparation (55.3%), sowing (53.3%), harvesting (48.0%), weeding (48.0%), sealing (48.0%), taking of fodder (47.3%), binding (44.0%), and drying (70.7%). However, 80.0%, 75.4%, 50.0% and 48.0% of respondents did not take participation in selling, spreading chemical, threshing and storage, respectively.

Table III depicts the ranking order of the participation of rural women. Seed cleaning is first order activity then wheat operations (harvesting, binding and threshing) are second, vegetable production and management is third, maize husking fourth and fruit crop management operations are fifth order activity performed by rural women. It can be depicted from the data discussed above that the females in the research area were heavily involved in the activities related to the production of wheat and vegetables which are the main sources of food among rural families in Pakistan. These activities were mainly for domestic consumption of food and the survival of the family with special reference to food requirements. It indicates that the economically poor families in rural areas, especially women, are much concerned about to the activities which may ensure the survival of the family. The data concerning participation of rural women (respondents) in food storage activities are presented in Table IV. The respondents were involved in the food storage activities such as cleaning of wheat, sun drying of agricultural products, and cleaning of store rooms (mean. 1.40). Whereas, transportation of wheat for milling and storing of agricultural produce in bags was performed rarely (mean<0.80). AWFDF (2003) had stated that women contribute to food security not only through processing and

**Table III. Distribution of the respondents according to the rank order of activities related to crop production**

Activity	Rank order	Always		Rarely		Never		Mean	SD
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Seed cleaning	1	116	96.7	4	3.3	0	0.0	1.97	0.180
Wheat harvesting	2	85	70.8	27	22.5	8	6.7	1.64	0.605
Wheat binding	3.5	84	70.0	26	21.7	10	8.3	1.62	0.638
Wheat threshing	3.5	84	70.0	25	20.8	11	9.2	1.61	0.652
Vegetable production for domestic use	5	78	65.0	25	20.8	17	14.2	1.51	0.733
Vegetable picking	6	76	63.3	27	22.5	17	14.2	1.49	0.733
Irrigating the vegetable	7	75	62.5	28	23.3	17	14.2	1.48	0.733
Vegetable pest management	8	72	60.0	28	23.3	20	16.7	1.43	0.764
Applying the fertilizer to vegetables	9	70	58.3	30	25.0	20	16.7	1.42	0.762
Maize husking	10	38	31.7	28	23.0	54	45.0	0.87	0.869
Fruit crop management	11	2	1.7	9	7.5	109	90.8	0.11	0.362
Fruit picking	12	4	3.3	116	96.7	0	0.0	0.11	0.362
Packing of fruits	13	1	8.0	11	9.2	108	90	0.11	0.338

n=120 Always=2 Rarely=1 Never=0

**Table IV. Distribution of the respondents according to their participation in food storage activities**

Activity	Always		Rarely		Never		Mean	SD
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Storing of agricultural produce in bags	65	54.2	38	31.7	17	14.2	1.24	0.767
Cleaning of wheat for milling	117	97.5	3	2.5	0	0.0	1.98	0.157
Cleaning of store rooms	53	44.2	43	35.8	24	20.0	1.40	0.726
Transportation of wheat for milling	35	29.2	216	21.7	59	49.2	0.80	0.866
Sun drying of agricultural products	90	75.0	24	20.0	6	5.0	1.70	0.559

n=120 Always=2 Rarely=1 Never=0

**Table V. Distribution of the respondents according to the ranking order of the food storage activities**

Activity	Rank order	Always		Rarely		Never		Mean	SD
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
Cleaning of wheat for milling	1	117	97.5	3	2.5	0	0.0	1.98	0.157
Sun drying of agricultural products	2	90	75.0	24	20.0	6	5.0	1.70	0.559
Cleaning of store rooms	3	53	44.2	43	35.8	24	20.0	1.40	0.726
Storing of agricultural produce in bags	4	65	54.2	38	31.7	17	14.2	1.24	0.767
Transportation of wheat for milling	5	35	29.2	216	21.7	59	49.2	0.80	0.866

n=120 Always=2 Rarely=1 Never=0

preparation of food but also through indigenous practice of storing and godowning the food.

The data in Table V depict that the rural women were involved in cleaning of wheat for milling is ranked as first order then sun drying of agri. products, cleaning of store room, storing of products in bags and transportation of

wheat for milling as the second, third, fourth and fifth order activities. It is cleared that women were extensively involved in activities at their home but less participation was shown in transportation due to physical wear and tear of their body.

## CONCLUSIONS

Rural women in the study area were actively involved in activities related to crop production and storage. Women of the arid area perform their role in wheat and vegetable production extensively. Whereas maize and fruit production were least participated by them. There still remain a need to plan and explore their access to non-formal educational resources, the extent to which they utilize these resources and the obstacles to gender mainstreaming in extension services.

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