

Analysis of Socio-Economic Problems Affecting Women in Agriculture: A Case Study of Ghotki, Sindh, Pakistan

Abdul Jaleel Mirjat¹, Bahadur Ali Soomro^{2*}, Shahnawaz Mangi³

¹PhD Scholar, Department of Sociology, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan

²Visiting Faculty and Research Fellow, Area Study Centre, Far East and Southeast Asia, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan

³PhD Research Scholar, Area Study Centre, Far East and Southeast Asia, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan

*Corresponding author

Abstract: - In the present era, agrarian women are confronting with big socio-economic problems. Particularly, in the field of agriculture, women have severe issues concerning socio-economic conditions. Taking into consideration, the present study is attempted to investigate the socio-economic problems which are faced by the women in the agriculture sector in Ghotki District of Sindh, Pakistan. We employed a survey questionnaire to get the responses from the agrarian women randomly. In total 225 valid cases have proceeded for the final analysis. By applying the contingency table method, the study found the agricultural women are facing the big socio-economic problems such as bad behaviour of the landowner, the problem of getting wages in time, and the problem of harsh conditions of the weather. They revealed that the hardship of work becomes responsible for their illness and health problems. Males are earning more money than females despite the same work. Finally, the women also underlined that they are not independent of consuming the amount which they obtained from agriculture in the shape of wages. The study may be valuable to know the challenges and problems that are frequently faced by the agrarian women of the rural areas of Ghotki or Sindh. The investigation may enrich and further validates the issues that have raised by the present study.

Keywords: Socio-economic problems, Women, Agriculture, Ghotki

I. INTRODUCTION

Sindh is an agricultural rich province in Pakistan whereas Agriculture stated as the primary survival economic source of people of Sindh. Meanwhile, Ghotki district of Sindh contributed much more in the agricultural field as compared to other areas of Sindh. Thus the development of the nation depends on agricultural strategies in the province. Hence, agricultural production can be boosted up by the introduction of the advanced technology in agricultural set up in the district. Thus, such the advanced apparatus and tools along with the application of new strategies and trends that assist in developing a significant growth rate in the country (Kwa, 2001). However, women have participated and contributed for productive purposive in the agricultural sector; they are less paid for such a great worth in agrarian setting. Parting with this, these women are discriminated because of a male –

dominant factor in a society that is why they cannot be appreciated despite much more production and contribution in the agricultural field.

Moreover, there lack the official statistical figures regarding the actual data of women's participation and contribution as well the role in agricultural fields for the development of the country. Nevertheless, women have a vital role in the development of the state but marginalized in fieldwork likewise other sectors in the country. Broadly, Pakistani society is recognized as an agrarian society and struggling to maintain the status and stand in the row of the developed world nations. Further, the constructive objectives as developed for the research study. Women's development is highly considered an essential factor for national progressive strategies in all societies of the social world. Generally, there is poverty-stricken women of rural families and work along with men to generate more revenue for the survival of families. Thus, these women traditionally share men's job for the requirement of economic needs for survival facts in a society. Moreover, rural women found as economically active in field work but consigned systematically. Similarly, the research study aims to discuss the role of women for the socio-economic development of Ghotki District.

Further, it would assist to know the participation and contribution of women in harvesting task, cotton picking work and animal rearing and breeding task. Hence, the critical research questions communicated for responses from the respondent's families regarding the economic condition. The specific parts of issues focus on participation and contribution of women; revenue generation, and family's role in agrarian tasks, and other problems as faced by women in agricultural labour. This study supports to assess the role and contribution of women in the agricultural setting of the district.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In Sindh, the majority of women are confronted with the many social economic barriers and challenges in the province. Thus, these social and economic factors have been recognized as

significant challenges for women in society (Raynolds, 1998). For such the reasons and conflict situation; women initiate to work so that they properly rear their children and run their family system. Thus, women attentively earn for children and families, therefore, and live a better social life among other members of the society. Women allot more time for production than men. At the same time, and take care of children and home Carpenter (2000). Thus, women are known as the greatest cultivator than a male counterpart. These women remained more much sincere and committed to their jobs than male figures of rural society. They work like machinery and the rented figures in the agricultural field. Irrespective to this, the majority of women take the overburdens and responsibilities of their families in society rather than working agrarian work in rural regions. Thus, these women rear children and kept away from farming work. Besides this, they perform other tasks including crop cutting picking and storing; weeding, and planting (Kongolo and Bamgose, 2002).

Further, women discrimination develops hindrance and discouragement for women in society. Hence, the patriarchal domain affected society which cannot permit women to work with men in a community (Prakash, 2003). The female labour force is as efficient as the male population. In both countries, Indian and Pakistan are similar socio-economic cultures (Zaheeret al., 2014). According to Diroet al. (2018), female- and male-managed plots experience substantial improvements in productivity when the women who incline them are empowered.

Further, women's empowerment contributes not only improving, specifically, productivity from farms managed by women but also reducing the gender gap in agricultural productivity. Agriculture is carried out by labour contributions from men and women in a collaborative manner. Quantifying the share of food produced by women involves making random assumptions regarding their role in various places which may not be true in universal context (Doss, 2014). Aggrawal (2003) claimed that woman contribute much more in agricultural production that has been generally acknowledged. Similarly, the study of Kelkar (2011) underlined that agrarian extension and information on new technologies are almost exclusively directed to men, even when women are increasingly responsible for farm work. Parting with this, human religious and cultural barriers and hurdles have stopped women movement and development in a society. Therefore, they participate less in the agricultural sector. In addition to this, women even become the effect of pesticides during fieldwork and they quickly catch by skin diseases and asthma issue (Kato et al., 2004). Therefore, women cannot recognize the lethal consequences of such dangerous and poisonous pesticides (García, 2005). However, the policies as developed in agricultural settings that do not suit to women because these policies cannot be proved as fruitful to women. They become the overburden and good for nothing for women. They are less paid for their labour in

society. Gender discrimination and inequality affect the participation of women in agricultural environ and resulting in less production and developing other social problems. Equal distribution of work; equal wages for women; women access to technical assistance and the market that may encourage the economic conditions of women in society. The practice of discrimination and inequality in Pakistani society found as the leading social issue in this country.

Moreover, women are treated as the second sex partner and less paid figure of society; they are kept at their respective homes. Other women who work in a community; they are respected more as compared to non-working women. Besides this, these women cannot give the time and care for their families, and their nature becomes rigid due to long hour working situation (Ferdoos, 2006). Women perform multi-tasking like harvesting, taking care of livestock; helping husband in agrarian work; drying, cleaning and storing grains; and maintaining home. Further, the technical guidance and support can reduce such burden of women in society (Sidhu, 2007).

III. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aims to investigate the problems which are faced by agrarian women of Ghotki, District in the agriculture sector. Based on this aim, we proposed the following specific objective for observation of the phenomenon of the problems.

- To investigate the problems faced by them while doing farm activities
- To highlight the type of problems faced by women in agriculture
- To examine the effect of work in agriculture on their health
- To observe that the women independency to consume their income
- To explore the wage differentials between male and female laborer

IV. METHODS

The research study was conducted in the Ghotki, District of Sindh, Pakistan. The aim of the study was set out to investigate the female labour force participation in the agricultural sector. This is a cross-sectional study in which data were collected from the women who were working in the agriculture field. A sample of 225 women was chosen with the help of multistage random sampling. The total sample size of the study was 225 female labourers. This sample was drawn through "Multi-Stage Simple Random" Sampling choosing the tehsils, union councils on hierarchal stages. We tried to cover all areas of the District Ghotki (all tehsils) by collecting the data from the rural women. Five villages from each tehsil as selected for getting the responses from the respondents (Table 1). Finally, we applied 225 samples to infer the results.

Table 1. Sampling profile

Name of tehsil	No. of villages selected	Sampling from each village
Mirpur Mathelo	5	45
Daharki	5	45
Ghotki	5	45
Ubauro	5	45
Khangarh	5	45
Total	25	225

V. RESULTS

Demography of the respondents indicates that the majority of the women like 52 % (n=117) were in between 31-45 years of age. However, we observed a minimum number (4.44 % or n=10) of aged women of the above 60 years of age. Similarly, the majority of women found married (73.78% or n=166) and 4 (1.78%) as divorced. With regard to education, the majority of women like 80.89% (n=182) found as illiterate. However, only 2.67 % (n=6) women belonged to the middle pass. A considerable number of women of Ghotki (79.11% or 178) were from extended or joint family (Table 2).

Table 2. Respondents' profile

	Category	Frequency	%
Age	15-30 years	40	17.78
	31-45 years	117	52.00
	46-60 years	58	25.78
	Above 60 years	10	4.44
	Total	225	100.0
Marital status	Unmarried	38	16.89
	Married	166	73.78
	Widow	17	7.55
	Divorced	4	1.78
	Total	225	100.0
Education	Primary	17	7.55
	Middle	6	2.67
	Illiterate	182	80.89
	Quran	20	8.89
	Total	225	100.0
Family type	Nuclear	47	20.89
	Joint	178	79.11
	Total	225	100.0

We acquired the response from agrarian women about the problems in the farm activities. The contingency table (Table 3) results that the majority of women 89.78 % (n=202) opined in “yes” option. Whereas the only 10.22 % (n=10) women faced no any problem in the farm activities or in working farms (Table 3). As a result, it can be concluded that there are

certain problems which are faced by the women of Ghotki in agriculture.

Table 3. The problems faced by them while doing farm activities

Category	Frequency	%
Yes	202	89.78
No	10	10.22
Total	225	100.0

In regard to socio-economic problems of Ghotkian women, the majority of women 42.67 % (n=96) (Table 4) underlined that they are affected by bad attitude and obnoxious behaviour of the owner towards their working labour. Women (39.11 %= n=88) (Table 4) also highlighted another serious problem that they do not get the wages within due time. The owners are making deliberately delays in giving the wages despite the fact that they have the capability to afford such the amount. Besides, weather agrarian women confront another serious issue. 18.22 % (n=41) (Table 4) women stated the weather as a significant problem in their way of working. The weather conditions like cold, hard and rainy weather that decrease the potential and average of women to do work in the agriculture field. In consequence, bad attitude of the owner of land, not delivery of their wages on time and the changing of weather conditions are the frequent and essential issues which are faced by the women of Ghotki in the agriculture sector.

Table 4. Type of problems faced by women in agriculture

Category	Frequency	%
Bad attitude of owner	96	42.67
Problem of getting wages in time	88	39.11
Problem of working in harsh conditions of weather	41	18.22
Total	225	100.0

Agrarian women seriously get ill when they work in agriculture. The hazardous conditions of the environment make them sick and limited to the bed. In our results, the majority of women 87.11 % (n=196) (Table 5) revealed that work is not good for health. As usually, they become ill due to dull work in the field. On the other hand, a few number 12.89% (n=29) (Table 5) women proposed that work has not any adverse effect on their health. They are enjoying the work without any health problem.

Furthermore, the majority of respondents 92. 89 % (n=209) (table 5) have highlighted that they are not enough independent in consuming their incomes on their own. In other words, their wages are received by their heads of family or elder of the family. The heads of family consume the earned income (by women) on the different basic needs and survival facts. Whereas, the only 7.11 % (n=16) (Table 6) women noticed as self-sufficient in making their own decisions in terms of consumption of the money.

Table 5. The effect of work in agriculture on their health

Category	Frequency	%
Yes	196	87.11
No	29	12.89
Total	225	100.0

Table 6. Independence to consume their income

Category	Frequency	%
Yes	16	7.11
No	209	92.89
Total	225	100.0

In a sequel, it was found that the majority of women (71.11% or n=160) (Table 6) underlined that there are differences in the males' wages than females'. Males are getting more wages as compared to females. In contrast, 28.89 % (n=65) (Table 7) women have answered in "No". This response underlines that in some areas of Ghotki, there is equally treated by men and women in terms of their wages. However, in most of the regions, there is considerable gender discrimination with women.

Table 7. Wage difference between male and female laborers

Category	Frequency	%
Yes	160	71.11
No	65	28.89
Total	225	100.0

VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study was designed to investigate the socio-economic problems affecting women in agriculture in Ghotki, District of Pakistan. The cross-sectional data were collected to get the objectives of the study. The results found that in the farms of agriculture there are many problems faced by them while doing farm activities. The women are not independent of consuming their earned money for their purposes. The women are earning less money in the shape of wages than men in the agriculture sector. They are not happy with the attitude of the landowners. They lately get their wages from the owners. However, some owners engulf the earned money forever. The agrarian women are facing big issues in their health. Work is a significant factor that makes them illness due to tiredness and giddiness. They lose their energies while working in the field. The weather is also a significant problem that is faced by women. These results are consistent with the earlier studies of Raynolds (1998); Carpenter (2000); Kongolo and Bamgose (2002; Alvi et al., (2012) who claimed the same issues of the agrarian women working in the agriculture sector.

In conclusion, the study claimed that women are facing the big socio-economic problems such as bad behaviour of landowner; the difficulty of getting wages in time; and the problem of harsh conditions of the weather. Adversity of work counted as a serious issue for their health. Discrimination in wages also a severe effect. There is an excellent dominance of males in deciding for household and money matter. The findings of the study may be beneficial to policymakers and government authority of Pakistan to increase the wage level among the agrarian women. The study unveils the problems in the relation of health may be resolved by providing the health facilities mainly in the rural regions of Ghotik District- Sindh-Pakistan.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Agarwal, B. (2003). Gender and land rights revisited: exploring new prospects via the state, family and market. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 3 (1&2), 184-224.
- [2]. Alvi, T. U. R., Hanif, I. H., Feryal, I., Waraich, I. A. & Mortaza, N. (2012). Women participation in socio-economic development in agriculture areas of Pakistan. *Universal Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 2(1), 9-20.
- [3]. Carpenter, S. A. (2000). Women who work in the field: The changing role of farm and nonfarm women on the farm. *Agricultural History*, 74 (2), 465-474.
- [4]. Diiro, G. M., Seymour, G., Kassie, M., Muricho, G., & Muriithi, B.W. (2018). Women's empowerment in agriculture and agricultural productivity: Evidence from rural maize farmer households in western Kenya. *PLoS ONE*, 13(5), 1-27.
- [5]. Doss, C. (2011). The role of women in agriculture. *ESA Working Paper No.* 11-02.
- [6]. Ferdoos, A. (2006). Social status of rural and urban working women in Pakistan: A comparative study. *Pakistan Development Review*, 32 (1), 101-125.
- [7]. García, Z. (2005). Impact of agricultural trade on gender equity and the position of rural women in developing countries. *Federico Caffè Centre Department of Social Sciences Roskilde University*. www.ruc.dk/federico.
- [8]. Kato, I., Watanabe-Meserve, H., Koenig, K. L., Baptiste, M. S., Lillquist, P.P., Frizzera, G., Burke, J. S., Moseson, M., & Shore R. E. (2004). Pesticide Product Use and Risk of Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma in Women. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 112 (13), 1275-1281.
- [9]. Kelkar, G. (2011). Gender and productive assets: Implications for women's economic security and productivity. *Economic & Political Weekly*, 46(23), 59-68
- [10]. Kongolo, M., & Bamgose, O. (2002). Participation of rural women in development: A case study of TshesengThintwa, and Makhalaneng Villages, South Africa. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 4 (1), 79-92.
- [11]. Kwa, A. (2001). *Trade-related agenda, development and equity*. T.R.A.D.E. Occasional Papers 4.
- [12]. Raynolds, L. T. (1998). Harnessing Women's Work: Restructuring Agricultural and Industrial Labor Forces in the Dominican Republic. *Economic Geography*, 74 (2), 149-169.
- [13]. Sidhu, K. (2007). Participation Pattern of Farm Women in Post Harvesting. *Studies on Home and Community Science*, 1(1), 45-49.
- [14]. Zaheer, R., Zeb, A., & Khattak, S. W. (2014). Women participation in Agriculture in Pakistan (An overview of the constraint and problems faced by rural women). *Journal of Business and Management*, 16(2), 01-04.