



## ANALYSIS OF ISSUES FACED BY WOMEN IN FARMING SYSTEM OF PUNJAB, PAKISTAN

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### ABSTRACT

Punjab is considered one of the most blessed provinces of Pakistan because of its fertile soil. It is also most populated province of Pakistan. Majority of the people rely on their livelihood on agriculture and livestock. Women are also participating equally to perform different activities related to farming. Their contribution is remarkable and significant in this sector, but they are facing many problems while performing agricultural activities like health issues, lack of access to use of new farming technologies, access to market, transport problem, work burden, domestic chores related problems and many others. The study was carried out to highlight the issues of females in performing agricultural activities in the Department of Sociology, G.C. University Faisalabad during 2019. Data was collected from four hundred women of three districts of Punjab i.e. Multan, Rawalpindi and Chiniot. Research revealed that illiteracy, health issues, unsafe practises of faming, transport issues, inadequate wages and many other hurdles were stumbling block in the way of women participation in farming system. It is considered male profession, and this attitude of society restricts the women excess to market.

KEYWORDS: Domestic and farming chores; farming; female participation; frequency; issues; socio-cultural problems; health risk; academic wellbeing; junk foods; rural students; Pakistan.

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### INTRODUCTION

According to data on global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) released on 11 July 2019, 76% of the global population are experiencing poverty (UNDP, 2019). Female around the globe are underprivileged in many ways like the right of education, land and asset ownership, facing discrimination in wages and earnings relative to male, and are deprived in enjoying their socio-economic rights in household and society matters (FAO, 2011; World Bank, 2012).

Kabane (2010) narrated that nature of hurdles being faced by women in farming system can be varied from society to society and culture to culture. In societies which are male dominant and have patriarchal structure like in Nigeria, Afghanistan and many others, women do not enjoy the right of land in heritance. It is common perception in all those countries that land is inherited to male members of family like husband and son etc.

Almost 75% women accepted that their workload increased during famine period and almost half respondents were involved in non-farming activities for earning more income for their household (Alston and Kent, 2004). These types of off-farming activities were adopted for the sake of earning to fulfil the household expenditures.

Thresia (2004) pointed out certain issues facing by female in agriculture in his paper "women workers in

agriculture". These issues were working environment, unfair treatment with female workers, gender discrimination, working conditions and health related complications. Two of the grim problems was related to physical problems (abortion, stillbirths, and premature deliveries) and psychological problems due to increasing working hours, socio-economic uncertainty and poverty. Beside health problems, they had to face some other social issues like gender inequity in terms of right of education, employment and resource, which made them dependent and defenceless with low self-respect.

Alston and Mason (2008) exposed the truth that male captured almost all strong and important position in every sector of society on climate change position, agricultural sector and political positions. This hegemony of male in all sectors kept away from right to take decision, and remained women in disadvantage position. He gave evidence for this exploitation by giving the example of gender membership of board in the Murray-Darling Basin and highlighted that women held less than 30% positions. This condition cleared the uneven and injustice perspective of women participation in the issue of water debate.

This study was undertaken in three divisions of Punjab with a view to highlight the issues of females which are creating stumbling block in the way of women

participation in performing agricultural activities.

### METHODOLOGY

Present study was conducted in GC University Faisalabad during 2019. Research methodology is a pathway, which guides the researchers for doing research scientifically. It is also, important that methodology should be obvious and scientifically justified to every step of research. Research in social sciences has major focus on highlighting, investigating and giving details about social phenomena related to human behaviour and characteristics (Sufian, 1998). Punjab was selected for conducting the study because majority of population in this province lives in rural areas and involves in agricultural activities. Women are also equally participating in almost all farming activities. Quantitative study was conducted for collecting data. Multistage sampling techniques were used for collecting data from those females who were performing different activities related to farming. Distribution of area to collect information was done in such a way that whole Punjab was covered in the research i.e. three sites each from Northern zone (Rawalpindi Division), Middle zone (Faisalabad Division) and Southern Zone (Multan Division). Three sites each from southern, central and northern areas of Punjab i.e. Rawalpindi Division, Faisalabad Division and Multan Division were selected to collect information. Interview schedule was tool for data collection. Four hundred respondents were interviewed. Descriptive Statistics with frequencies and percentages were used for analyzing data to compile results of the study. STATISTIX 8.1 was used for analysis.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research data encircled the issues being faced by women involved in farming system of Punjab. Different variables were used to emphasize all those factors which are responsible for creating hurdles in the way of female in farming system.

Age is an important indicator to determine involvement of females in productive activities. It was observed (Fig. 1) that highest percentage of respondents (25%) were of age ranging from 31-35 years, followed by 21-25 (15.5%), 46-above (14.2%) and 26-30 (14%). It is interesting to note that women of age 46-above had a sizeable percentage taking part in the farming activities. They might have more spare time to respond. According to Punjab bureau of statistics (PBS, 2015), large number of individuals in Punjab had age ranging from 15 to 65 years. Dhillon et al. (2007) conducted a research on women in different zones of Indian Punjab. They concluded that many of women belonging to age group of 24-56 were involved in farming activities.

They were highly active in agriculture activities and performing different task.

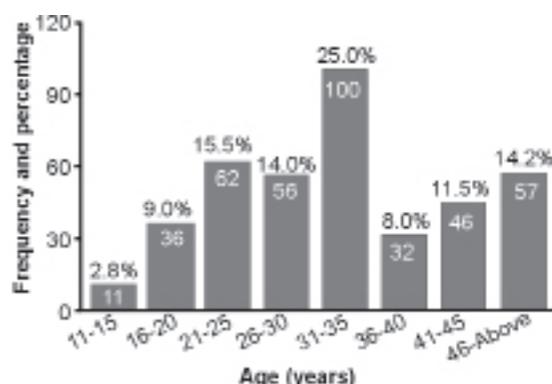


Fig. 1. Frequency percentage of respondents of different age groups involved in farming activities.

Table 1 depicted that mean value for age (32.54 years) was in middle of respondents' ages. Furthermore, mean, median and mode values were almost similar. It showed that data were nearly symmetrical. On the average, 9.79 of deviation from mean value (32.54) was found for age of respondents. High coefficient of variation (30.09%) showed a wide range of age of respondents selected for this study along with majority of young women (below mean value of 32.54 years). Negative value of kurtosis showed that distribution was platykurtic i.e. flattop, while positive value of skewness showed that distribution was approximately symmetrical.

Table 1. Estimates of mean, median, mode, standard deviation, coefficient of variance, kurtosis and skewness of age

X ± SD	32.54 ± 9.79
Median	33.00
Mode	33.00
CV (%)	30.09
Kurtosis	-0.92
Skewness	0.05

Major portion of respondents (57.5%) involved in farming were from Multan division, while 30% respondents belonged to Faisalabad division and 12.5% belonged to Rawalpindi (Fig. 2). The reason to have more respondents from Multan Division was that Multan division has more rural population as compared to other divisions of study, as narrated by PBS (2015).

Education is a prime indicator in any research. Majority of the respondent (67.5%) involved in farming were illiterate, while only 32.5% respondents were educated up till matriculate (Fig. 3). It is due to low literacy rate in villages, particularly those who are involved in farming activities. Mahdi(2014) conducted a research on

assessment of women farmers and their participation in agriculture extension services. He concluded that 85% female in Ethiopia were illiterate. Similarly, Dhillon *et al.* (2007) stated that majority of female working on farms in India were illiterate. According to Australian Bureau of Statistics (2004), rural women had lower literacy rate than urban women, and mostly worked as part-timers with low wages, and due to low qualification, they had to face problems while finding available options for employment(Wendt and Cheers, 2004).

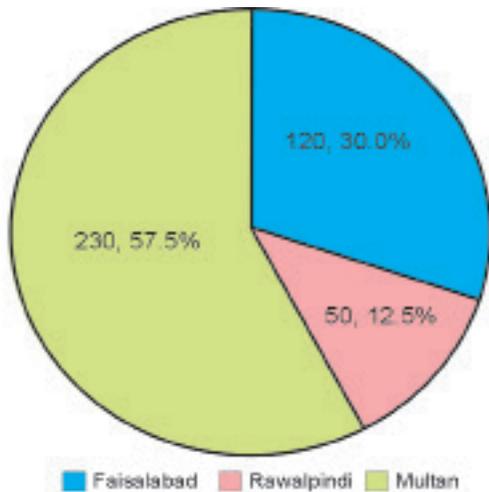


Fig. 2. Frequency percentage of respondents involved in farming activities from different areas

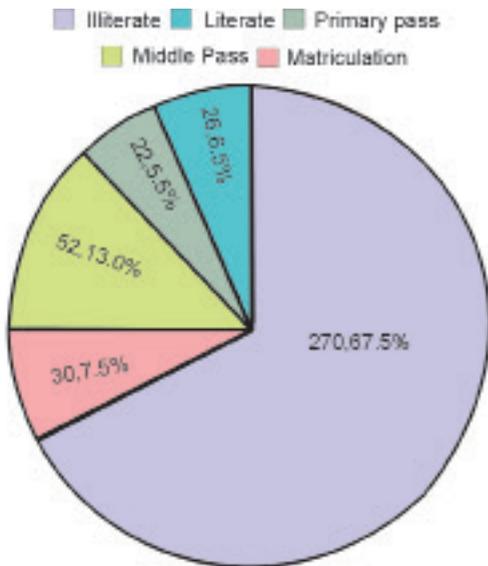


Fig. 3. Frequency percentage of education of respondents involved in farming activities

Majority of respondents (43.8%) involved in farming had annual household income of Rs. 80,000-100,000, which was the lowest one. It was followed by 26.5% respondents who had annual household income of Rs. 100,001-120,000. The %age of respondents involved in farming decreased linearly with increase of annual

income (Fig. 4). It disclosed the poor economic condition of farmers of rural area of Punjab. According to world bank definition of poverty, a person who earns less than \$1.25 (about Rs. 200) per day will be considered poor. In Economic Survey of Pakistan (2010-2011), earning of a person per month was Rs. 3243. Pakistan is ranked among 43 countries which are exposed to poverty risks. It means that poverty trend is high in Pakistan. Chaudhry and Chaudhry (2008) stated that 20% increase in food prices in Pakistan would result in 8% of poverty.

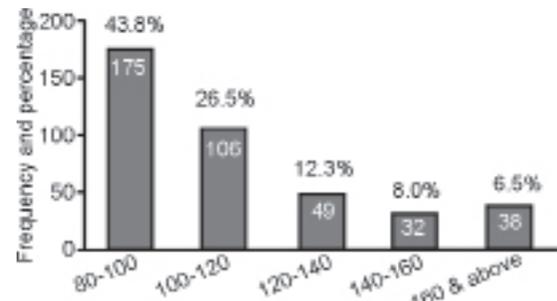


Fig. 4. Frequency percentage of respondents having different income involved in farming activities

Table 2 depicted that mean value for annual household income (Rs. 112600) was in between the range of income of respondents involved in farming. Furthermore, mean, median and mode values were almost similar. It showed that data were nearly symmetrical. On the average, Rs. 26248 of deviation from mean value (Rs. 112600) was found for annual income of respondents. High coefficient of variation (23.31%) showed a wider range of annual income of respondents selected for this study along with majority of women having low income (below mean value of Rs. 112600). Negative value of kurtosis showed that distribution was platykurtic i.e. flattop, while positive value of skewness showed that distribution was approximately symmetrical.

Table 2: Estimates of mean, median, mode, standard deviation, coefficient of variance, kurtosis and skewness of income

$\bar{X} \pm SD$	112600± 26248
Median	110000
Mode	90001
CV(%)	23.31
Kurtosis	-0.21
Skewness	0.99

Figure 2 reflects female responses about spending their time on farms and domestic chores. Majority (41%) of respondents pronounced that they spent 4-6 hours on farms, followed by 31% who spent 3 or less hours on farms while only 9% respondents spent more than 9 hours on farms. Similarly, majority (43%) of respondents gave 4-6 hours to domestic chores while

only 10.5% respondents gave more than 9 hours to perform domestic chores. It showed that majority of females found active for 4-6 hours working on farms as well as domestic chores. These results are in contrary to those of Simango (2015) who revealed that women spent more time in the field than in non-agricultural activities but in total, their working hours were long. Likewise, Kalyani et al. (2011) and Chancellor (1997) narrated that women's working days were long and hard. Samee et al. (2015) estimated that on an average, a woman works 12 to 15 hours a day or a minimum of 25-35 hours per week on household chores. It seems that working hours of rural woman are more than that of the urban woman. They work for about 12 to 15 hours on average in a day. Half of this is dedicated for household chores and the other half is spent in activities related to agricultural activities mainly livestock rearing.

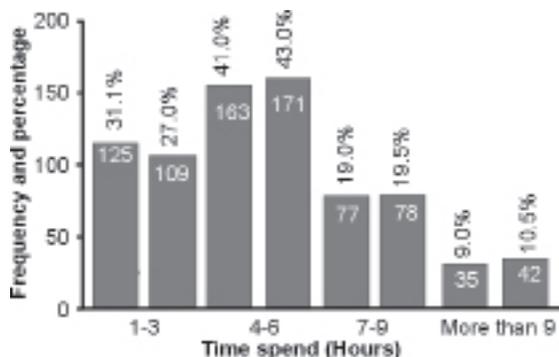


Fig. 5. Female responses about time spending on different chores

As regard health condition (Table 3), majority (80.5%) of respondents suffered from any diseases while only 19.5% did not suffer any disease and found healthy. Among ailing females, 29.5% respondents suffered from chronic diseases while 46.2% from communicable diseases. Only 26.3% ailing women had medical

facilities around for their treatment but majority (68.7%) of respondents could not have easy access to medical facilities while 5% had no access to medical facilities for their treatment. It showed that medical facilities for working women in villages is limited throughout the Punjab. Samee et al. (2015) revealed the fact that women involved in spraying cotton develop various kinds of skin allergies and could not carry out their domestic duties effectively during this season. Even, they were not able to cook and care for their children in the cotton growing and picking period due to the time consumed in agriculture tasks.

It is evident from Fig.6 that the certain problems faced by female during their work on farms like transport problems (46%), road condition (60%), applying chemicals (43%), food availability issue (42%) and use of technology (42%), majority were agreed on facing these problems. While on certain issues, they were strongly agreeing to face the problems like non-availability of safety measure i.e. gloves and mask etc. (40%) and wages dissatisfaction (35%). There were some hurdles which were not facing by majority of respondents like harassment at workplace (49%), reproductive health issues (37%) and domestic violence (45%).

Table 3. Health status and treatment

Category	Frequency	Percentage
<b>a. Suffering from any disease</b>		
Yes	322	80.5
No	78	19.5
Total	400	100.0
<b>b. Types of diseases</b>		
Communicable disease	185	46.2
Chronic disease	118	29.5
Both	97	24.3
Total	400	100.0
<b>c. Access to medical facilities</b>		
To some extent	275	68.7
To great extent	105	26.3
Not at all	20	5.0
Total	400	100.0

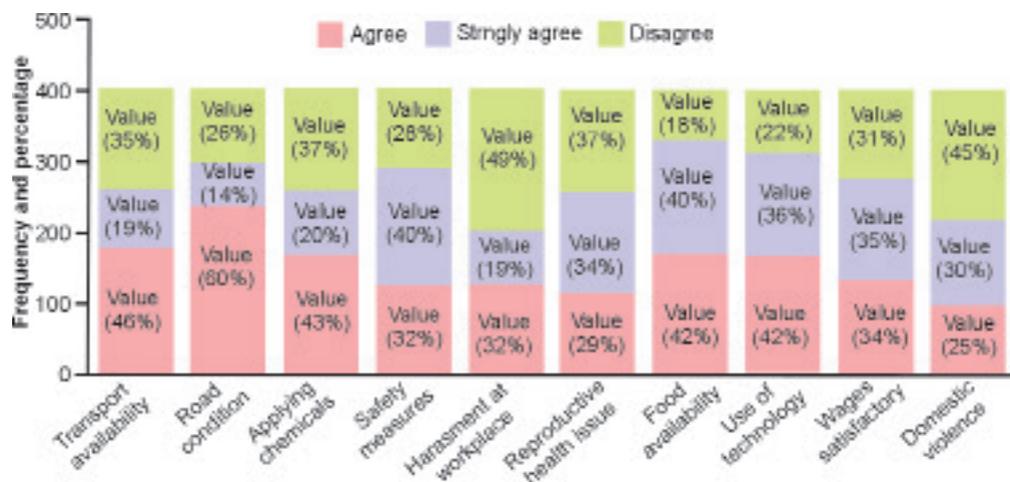


Fig. 6. Distribution of the respondents about problems facing during performing farming activities

On the contrary, in total 51% females responded on agreeing/strongly agreeing of harassment at workplace, 63% reproductive health issues and 55% domestic violence. This showed that these three problems existed in female farming community by and large.

### Major Findings

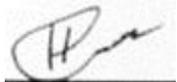
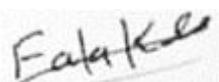
Women are facing many constraints during performing farming activities. These hurdles undermine the performance of women in this sector. This research highlighted some issues being faced by women in this sector. There are many socio-cultural problems being faced by women like health hazards, wages dissatisfaction, problems in applying of chemicals, access to market for buying and selling products and many others. The objective of this study was to highlight all those issues which are creating stumbling block in the way of women participation. These problems further undermine the country progress overall. There are no policies and incentives which are available for women in farming system in order to give their maximum output in this sector.

### CONCLUSION

Pakistan being agrarian country, it is crucial to increase women participation in farming system. Women represent a major chunk of population and face different constraints to give their maximum output in this sector. Research revealed that illiteracy, health issues, unsafe practises of faming, transport issues, inadequate wages and many other hurdles are stumbling block in the way of women participation in farming system. Gender factor is also one of the major factors which minimize women participation in farming system. Policies should be drafted at national level in general, and specifically at province level to enhance the female participation in farming system.

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S. No	Name of author	Contribution	Signature
1	Tehmeena Ikram Ullah	Interpretated the data	
2	Haq Nawaz Anwar	Proof read the manuscript	
3	Falak Sher	Collected the data	
4.	Muhammad Musa	Analysed the data and prepared writeup	