

## Gender Involvement in Rainfed Agriculture of Pothwar

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### Abstract

**In the patriarchal family system men are generally recognized as the head of family and are mostly involved in the formal economic and social affairs and decision-making in the community. On the other hand women are equally involved in the productive, reproductive and community activities but are viewed as the passive members of the family. To help them to get out of the misery it is required to make them more visible in the productive work. That could only be possible if we fully understand the mechanism of gender roles prevailing in the society. The present study was an effort to highlight the gender roles in the rainfed agriculture of the Pothwar. Women being half of the family human capital were equal partners in crop production and livestock management. Therefore, they are entitled to be trained in crop production and livestock management techniques and it is also important to make extension service gender sensitive for ensuring equity in access and control over resources.**

**Key Words:** Gender, involvement, farming activities

### Introduction

In patriarchal societies gender relations are usually unbalanced where the male members of the family contribute in formal economic and social affairs and are recognized as the head of family. In contrast women play a vital role in the family activities but their contribution usually undermined and remains unrecognized even in the national statistics. Therefore, women remain in disadvantaged position as compared to men because women's position within the household depends much more on her social and economic status, access to education, health care, job opportunities, etc. (Noushin, 1999). The promotion of gender equality implies an explicit attention to women's needs, interests and perspectives. The new evidence demonstrates that when women and men are relatively equal, economies tend to grow faster, the poor move more quickly out of poverty, and the well being of men,

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women, and children is enhanced. There is growing evidence that gender plays an important role in economic growth, poverty reduction, and development effectiveness (Taj, 2001).

In rural economy, the role of men and women is very contributory and productive, especially in the cropping and livestock enterprise, women play an important role because either they are fully or partially responsible. Secondly, activities in the household like storing produce, winnowing wheat, cooking, cleaning etc. are done by women while men contribute meager in this context. Men exclusively do decisions related to enterprises. The importance of women's activities is not always proportionate with their access to and control over the resources and income (Cloud, 1985). Access to and control over resources within farming systems largely stem from the economic and socio-cultural environment, which has developed over centuries.

The rainfed tract of Pothwar is one of the poorest and a food deficient area. The population of the Pothwar is over two million of which 70% live in rural areas with limited employment opportunities. The small farmers on the average are deficit in all the subsistence products. Majority of the farmers (90%) operates below subsistence land resources of less than 5 hectares. The land productivity is also very low under erratic climatic conditions with an increase in population and limited land and water resources, male labor force has shifted to off-farm activities in urban areas, particularly in public sector. (Azeem et al., 1999). Consequently, leaving the responsibility of crops and livestock production with women in the area. Except few activities like ploughing the fields and threshing etc women are involved at all stages of crop production. As for as the livestock management is concern, women are again heavily involved in livestock production in the area.

The present study was carried out to explore the gender roles in crop and livestock farming in the rainfed area. It is assumed that it will provide useful information on gender roles in relation to prevailing farm activities, decision-making, and income generating activities.

## Materials and Methods

The Present Study was conducted in collaboration with the Barani Village Development Project's (BVDP) research component. A farm level survey was conducted in the integrated research sites of the Project namely Jarmot from Tehsil Gujar Khan, Hafizabad from Tehsil Jand and Kaslian from tehsil Pind dadan Khan. A sample of 150 households was selected through simple random sampling procedure. The data were collected through women farmers

**Table 1: Distribution of the sample by farm size**

Farm categories	Hafizabad	Jarmot	Kaslian	Overall
<b>Small</b>	16 (50 %)	26 (55 %)	23 (32 %)	65 (43 %)
<b>Medium</b>	11 (34 %)	13 (28 %)	27 (38 %)	51 (34 %)
<b>Large</b>	05 (16 %)	08 (17 %)	21 (30 %)	34 (23 %)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100 %)	47 (100 %)	71 (100 %)	150 (100 %)

## Results and Discussion

### General Information of Respondents of the Study Area

The joint family was (55%) while average family size was 8.4 persons in the study area. The majority of adult males as well as the females were either illiterate or having few years of education. Therefore, the female education was low as compared to males. Majority of the respondents both males and females were involved in farming either full time or part time. On the other hand the participation of males in off

interview using a well structured questionnaire. The data thus obtained were analysed using simple statistics to draw various responses and conclusions for pertinent suggestions.

The respondents were classified according to the size of their operational land holding as small upto 1.5 hectare, medium from 1.51 to 3.00 hectare and large with more than 3.00 hectares of land holding. The distribution of the sample is presented in the Table 1.

farm activities were 39 percent The off farm work pattern of male respondents was mostly the government employment; either in army or any other, as majority of the males were in public servants. Considerable number of males from Hafizabad and Jarmot were serving in army, Physical labour in a nearby industry was another significant source of off-farm work for 36% of males of the area. As majority of the women were illiterate therefore their participation in formal employment was nil in the area.

**Table 2: Percentage of family members working on-farm and off-farm activities (Nos.)**

Village Name	Full Time On-farm		Part Time On-Farm		Off Farm Work	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Hafizabad	38	60	23	16	42	0
Jarmot	44	7	28	43	28	3
Kaslian	38	12	35	61	46	0
Total	39	19	29	48	39	0

### Gender involvements in farming activities of various crops

Gender based role/participation in the rural economy is conditioned with several factors such as agro-ecological zones, farming systems, land tenure systems, sub-culture, education and literacy, physical infrastructure, level of adoption/diffusion of technologies, farm mechanization and the stage of agro-industrial development. There is however, an overall dearth of information on women and the role they play in society and economy. The contribution of women in agricultural activities in the developing countries is neither properly documented nor recognized in economic terms. Adequate database is the basic limiting factor to develop plans and policies

for the rural women. In Pakistan, the rural women constitute 36 percent of the total population. Five broad categories of economic activities have been identified for the rural women in Pakistan (Jaim and Rehman 1988): i) Household work ii) Family farming iii) Family non-farming (sewing, hand-knitting) iv) Non-agriculture work outside (teaching, service) v) Agricultural work outside the family (hired by others, post-harvest operations). These activities are further classified into three categories: a) crop activities, b) animal husbandry, and c) other professional and technical work.

Previous studies in the area (Azeem et. Al. 1999) concluded that generally females were not involved in the crop production activities pertaining to sowing,

application of fertilizer, ploughing or irrigating the fields. The present results also confirmed that pattern. Male farmers emerged the sole contributor in these farming activities. Threshing wheat, maize, groundnut and pulses was predominantly male activity. Seventy nine percent respondents declared harvesting wheat and maize crop as the activity of both; male as well as female. In general, male as well as female perform hoeing/weeding in wheat and maize crops however, in Hafizabad the majority of the respondents (47 %) had declared it as female activity. That might be due to more female involvement in farming activities in Hafizabad as compared to other two villages (Table 3). Both male and female farmers did wheat and maize grain storage and also carried out picking of groundnut and pulses. In Hafizabad and Kaslian the activity of fodder seed/grain storage was carried out both by male and female whereas in Jermot this activity was predominately performed by males. That might be due to more participation of males in farming

activities in Jermot as compared to the males of Hafizabad and Kaslian (Table 3). Males as well as females also carried out seed preparation activity for fodder crops. Although cleaning of groundnut/pulses, fodder cutting, mustard pulling and fodder chopping were rated predominantly female activities in Hafizabad yet this was not the situation in Jermot and Kaslian where majority of the respondents had declared that these activities were performed by women as well as by men.

In general females from each sample household equally participated in almost all farming activities mentioned above. However, the individual analysis of each village provided more detailed information of gender participation in farming activities. As compared to males, female participation was bit more intensive in groundnut, pulses and fodder related activities in Hafizabad where more females from each household were involved in the harvesting, cleaning and picking of groundnut and pulses.

**Table 3: Gender involvements in farming activities of various crops**

Activities	Hafizabad			Jermot			Kaslian			All		
	M	F	B	M	F	B	M	F	B	M	F	B
	Percent											
Hoeing in wheat/maize	21	47	32	21	14	65	38	24	38	30	28	42
Harvesting in wheat/maize	13	13	74	10	13	77	9	9	82	10	11	79
Threshing in wheat/maize	81	4	15	76	8	16	71	5	24	74	6	20
Storage in wheat/maize	43	10	47	34	21	45	29	29	42	34	22	44
Hoeing in G.nut/Pulses	19	56	25	0	0	100	0	0	0	16	47	37
Harvesting in G.nut/pulses	26	39	35	45	10	45	0	0	0	32	29	39
Threshing in G.nut/pulses	85	5	10	55	18	27	0	0	0	74	10	16
Cleaning in G.nut/pulses	4	74	22	0	55	45	0	0	0	3	68	29
Picking of G.nut/pulses	28	33	39	17	17	66	0	0	0	25	29	46
Fodder cutting	3	71	26	35	21	44	20	40	40	20	43	37
Mustard pulling	15	77	8	29	26	45	18	43	39	21	46	33
Fodder chopping	7	63	30	35	24	41	18	41	41	20	42	38
Fodder seed preparation	56	22	22	43	14	43	8	31	61	34	22	44
Fodder storage (seed/grain)	50	42	8	64	9	27	50	50	0	55	32	13

**Gender involvements in livestock management activities**

Several studies had reported that rural women participation is higher in livestock related activities as

compared to crop production activities. The results of this study endorsed some of the previous findings and

also provided few deviations as well. The findings regarding gender participation in livestock management activities are presented in Table 4.

The results presented in Table 4 indicate that females were involved in almost all livestock management activities extending from stall-feeding to the preparation of dung cakes. However, the level of gender participation varies from one activity to the other. In the sample area, milking/processing of milk, cleaning of livestock sheds, collection of farmyard manure and preparing dung cakes were the activities in which 62, 84, 84, and 90 percent women had full involvement.

**Table 4: Gender involvements in livestock management activities**

Activities	Hafizabad			Jarmot			Kaslian			All		
	M	F	Both	M	F	Both	M	F	Both	M	F	Both
Stall feeding	0	71	22	21	50	29	16	45	39	12	55	33
Grazing	57	29	14	70	10	20	61	17	22	62	18	20
Watering	3	68	29	14	56	30	23	44	33	15	54	31
Milking	0	90	10	14	60	26	30	45	25	17	62	21
Shed cleaning	0	94	6	6	75	19	2	85	13	3	84	13
FYM collection	0	97	3	9	71	20	0	86	14	3	84	13
Preparing dung cakes	0	100	0	0	100	0	0	87	13	0	90	10

### Conclusion/Suggestion

Women participation in most of the activities of crop production and livestock management was significant. They were intensively involved in hoeing/weeding, crop harvesting, cleaning and packing groundnut/pulses, fodder cutting, fodder chopping, mustard pulling, animal shed cleaning, feeding animals, watering animals, milking animals and processing milk, collecting farm yard manure and preparing dung cakes. However, their contribution is bit higher in livestock management activities as compared to crops related activities.

Women had no involvement in off farm income generating activities. Trainings in income generating activities such as poultry management and handicrafts could greatly help to generate additional income.

Being equal partners in crop production and livestock management women are entitled to be trained in crop production and livestock management techniques.

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Once again the females of Hafizabad had extreme involvement in these activities as compared to the females from Jarmot and Kaslian. As indicated earlier this intensive role might be due to more female involvement in farming activities in Hafizabad as compared to other two villages (Table 4). In livestock grazing males were contributing (62 %) while in other livestock management activities their role was either passive or supplementary. Other significant activities of livestock management in which women participation is quite substantial are 'stall feeding' and 'water hauling for drinking' (55 % and 54 %, respectively).

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