

## GENDER DIVISION OF LABOUR IN HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT AND THEIR PERCEPTION REGARDING TRAINING NEEDS IN POTOHAR REGION

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Household management is considered as the productive role of women in addition to their reproductive role of child bearing and rearing. Much of the rural women work is considered unpaid, efforts are not recognized and in some cases remain unreported. The gender wars are fought in many different arenas. One of the most contested sites is the home where men and women, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters negotiate their roles and struggle for power and cooperation. Women play a vital role in home management activities. Realizing the need for determining the context of gender division of labor in the household management, a study was, conducted in Chakwal District from Potohar Region of Punjab Province in Pakistan. It was revealed that managing household activities, family and social issues were mainly carried out by rural women followed by partially assisting to husbands in livestock and crop management. The husbands were mainly involved in crop management while partial help was sought from their wives in livestock and farming activities. The three top ranking activities of wives were children care, sanitation and safety of the house. The three top ranking activities of husbands were education and socialization of the children, conflict management, and social matters. It is concluded that gender division of labor does not simply imply intra-household distribution of responsibilities but gendered social structure entails ideological and material components that differently affect the overall well being of women and men. It is, therefore, suggested that public and private sector organizations/ institutions should reinforce the gender equality in socioeconomic domains through educational processes, changing cultural expectations and changing institutional social structure, so that men could allow their women to take training for their home management activities.

**Keywords:** division of labour, domestic work, rural women and changing cultural expectations

### INTRODUCTION

Gender is differentially defined in household activities at various societies of the world. The production and reproduction were two interlinked activities performed by the rural women, and much of the work they do, although productive, was unpaid. Rural men had always played a minor role in domestic work. But when we paid for some activity it was considered as "work", therefore cooking, child rearing and gardening were all works that were done by rural women (Cloud and Garrett, 1996). Rural women were the important pillars of household and considered superior in the skills of household chores as argued by Becker (1991) who stated that in the past, marriage was a product of spousal specialization whereby each partner adopted the roles for which he or she had superior skills. As a result rural men specialized in market work and rural women in domestic work. But due to economic revolution this institution was under stress as rural

women become financially independent.

Review of studies on migration behavior indicated that the pressure on rural women increased after rural men migration for better earning and in economic crisis and structural adjustments (Khan and Ahmed, 1996; IFAD, 1997; UNDP, 1998; Mwanamwambwa, 1999). The gender division of labor was increased in household activities to cope with the threat of poverty in those households headed by women (FAO, 1995) as prevailed in Near East region, these all activities were gender differentiated as concluded by World Bank (1995) in Zambia. Sultana *et al.* (1994) examined the pattern of time allocation of working and non-working rural women in rural Pakistan. They found that the wage earning rural women shared a larger burden of household work. On average, working rural women spent 19 hours per week in market-oriented work and 28 hours per week in household chores. On the other hand, non-working rural women spent 16 hours per week in domestic work (Ishaq, 1998). The rural women

who stayed at home were found to be wealthier and they afforded to take leisure. This all is the pity and hardship picture of rural women which showed that with a large share in household chores they are still deprived of rights (Akram, 2002).

Qamar (1990) in her seminar entitled "Role of rural women as target group in extension" reported that rural women performed many tasks as cooking food, collecting fuel wood, bringing water even from distant places, livestock management and care of animals, and rearing of children. Rural women also assisted their husbands in various farm operations in the field. Paul and Saadullah (1991) reported that rural women were responsible in 75%, 69%, 50%, 90%, 97% and 91% of the following work activities: washing utensils and cleaning house compound, releasing poultry and its feeding, post harvest activities (crops), crop preservation, cooking and fuel collection. Same views were also registered by Saito (1992); Eckman (1996); IFAD (1997); UNDP (1998); Mwanamwambwa, (1999) and Akram (2002).

Ishaq (1998) concluded that all the respondents participated in household activities i.e. look after family members, other handicrafts, knitting and embroidery, whereas, 95.3%, 92.6% and 71.3% of the respondents were involved in food preparation, building maintenance and fuel collection, respectively. Almost 99.3%, 93.3% and 51.3% of the respondents "mostly" were involved in household activities like look after all family member, food preparation and fuel collection. Whereas, 72.0%, 48.7% and 42.7% of the respondents were "occasionally" involved in household activities like building maintenance, embroidery and knitting, respectively. However, 50.7% of the respondents were "not at all" involved in other handicrafts of household activities. Such time consumption map was also drawn by Mashkooor (1995) in Pakistan and FAO/UNDP (2002) in Viet Nam.

The work load for the rural men is also not less in Pakistani community (Qamar, 1990; Mashkooor, 1995). However, they contribute less in home management activities and with better division of labour; they can facilitate their wives in household chores (Akram, 2002; Sultana *et al.*, 1994). But it needs to redefine their role in indoor and out door activities at their home as well as at their cultural/country level (Ishaq, 1998; Khan and Ahmed, 1996).

Realizing the need for the quantification of women participation in household's management and family issues and need for their training in the household management, a study was conducted to evaluate the gender division of labor in household management and

their perceptions regarding need of household training.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross sectional survey research design was used for the study. The Quantitative data were collected by using multistage random sampling technique. Two tehsils out of four were selected by simple random sampling technique. Five villages were selected randomly from each chosen tehsil keeping in view the different socio-economic variables. Twenty households were randomly selected from each selected village for formal interview purposes. A well thought and well conceive "interview schedule" was prepared as data collection tool. One married couple from each household was interviewed during the formal survey and in total 400 respondents (200 women and 200 men) were interviewed selected. The data was collected in face to face interview. The collected data were analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for interpretation of results.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Management and Family Activities:** Table1 depicts that in household management, the most frequent activities carried by rural women were child care, sanitation, safety health protection, different household chores and family health care. Regarding family level activities and social issues at community level, rural women's role in education and socialization of children and conflict management was relatively more frequent followed by social matters-participation in social activities. Rural men's participation in household management and family level activities was moderate. It can be concluded that managing households, family and social issues are mainly carried out by rural women followed by partially assisting to their husbands in livestock and crop management. The men are mainly involved in crop farming while partial help is sought from family rural women in livestock and farming activities.

These findings in Table 2 are used for ranking the order of participation in various activities. The three top ranking activities of rural women in household management were child care, sanitation and safety of health related aspects. The three top ranking activities of rural men in family activities were education and socialization of the children, conflict management, and social matters. Most of the variables were highly significant statistically. These results corroborate with

**Table 1. Distribution of respondents regarding gender division of labor in household management and family level activities**

Activity type	Rural women respondents (n=200)						Rural men respondents (n=200)						Statistical test	
	Never Freq.	%	Sometimes Freq.	%	Often Freq.	%	Never Freq.	%	Sometimes Freq.	%	Often Freq.	%	$\chi^2$ -value	Sig. level
<b>Household management</b>														
Household chores	18	9.0	12	6.0	170	85.0	172	86.0	21	10.5	7	3.5	277.383	0.000
Child care	7	3.5	7	3.5	186	93.0	167	83.5	27	13.5	6	3.0	327.641	0.000
Fuel collection	74	37.0	32	16.0	94	47.0	178	89.0	17	8.5	5	2.5	127.523	0.000
Family health care	12	6.0	31	15.5	157	78.5	168	84.0	25	12.5	7	3.5	273.038	0.000
Handicraft making	31	15.5	37	18.5	132	66.0	185	92.5	11	5.5	4	2.0	244.350	0.000
Sanitation	3	1.5	16	8.0	181	90.5	167	83.5	25	12.5	8	4.0	318.542	0.000
Safety/health protection	8	4.0	12	6.0	180	90.0	179	89.5	16	8.0	5	2.5	322.481	0.000
Education and socialization of children	14	7.0	9	4.5	177	88.5	151	75.5	40	20.0	9	4.5	285.106	0.000
Conflict management	47	23.5	42	21.0	111	55.5	163	81.5	30	15.0	7	3.5	157.737	0.000
Community management/development	44	22.0	62	31.0	94	47.0	165	82.5	28	14.0	7	3.5	157.838	0.000
Social matters-participation in social activities	60	30.0	39	19.5	101	50.5	162	81.0	33	16.5	5	2.5	134.308	0.000

**Table 2. Gender-based participation ranking for household management and family activities**

Activity type	Rural women respondents (n=200)			Rural men respondents (n=200)			Sig. level
	Mean <sup>1</sup>	Standard Deviation	Ranking order	Mean <sup>1</sup>	Standard Deviation	Ranking order	
<b>Household management</b>							
Child Care	2.895	0.406	1	1.195	0.467	5	0.000
Sanitation	2.890	0.359	2	1.205	0.494	7	0.000
Safety/security	2.860	0.449	3	1.130	0.405	9	0.000
Household chores	2.760	0.604	5	1.175	0.464	8	0.000
Family health care	2.725	0.567	6	1.195	0.478	6	0.000
Handicraft making	2.505	0.750	7	1.095	0.356	11	0.000
Fuel collection	2.100	0.913	11	1.135	0.409	10	0.000
Education and socialization of children	2.815	0.541	4	1.290	0.545	1	0.000
Conflict management	2.320	0.831	8	1.220	0.493	2	0.000
Community management/development	2.250	0.794	9	1.210	0.487	4	0.000
Social matters	2.205	0.876	10	1.215	0.469	3	0.000

<sup>1</sup> The scale used for estimating mean for the role and participation level is: 1=Never/none; 2=sometimes; 3=often.

the findings of Mwanambwa (1999), IFAD (1997) and FAO (2002) that women were very careful about their children, sanitation and safety of their family.

**Perception of Respondents Regarding Household Trainings Needs:**

Both the rural women and rural men respondents were asked about their training needs to effectively perform various activities related to household management and farm operation activities. Table 3: portrays that for household management, the rural women's responses were stronger than rural men. The rural women's proportion order of training needs for household activities was sanitation followed by children care, safety-health protection, family health care, general household chores and handicrafts making. Regarding family level activities and social issues, the education and socialization of children, community development, conflict management and social matters-participation in festivals, marriage etc. were areas of rural women's interest for training purposes in decreasing order. The above findings were quite consistent with social, economic and cultural environment prevailing in the study area (Government of Punjab, 2000).

The trainings needs identified by the respondents were also further gauged in terms of degree of importance attached to them by using Likert scale. Rural men respondents ranked education and socialization of

children, social matters and conflict management as the matter of most important. The rural women awarded the highest ranking score in importance order to areas like children care, sanitation and safety/security (Table 4).

A number of good indications could be drawn from Table 4. The findings clearly show that rural women folk want to contribute in household expenditure savings, in the household domain where they can perform household duties efficiently (Feder *et al.*, 2000; Lahai *et al.*, 2000; and Kamputa, 2000).

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Rural women related the most frequent activities at household management level were children care, sanitation and safety, different household chores and family health care. While women's frequent performed roles at family level activities were, education and socialization of children and social matters followed by conflict management.
2. The three top ranking activities of rural women at household management level were children care, sanitation and safety. Similarly, the three top ranking activities of rural men at community level were education and socialization of the children, conflict management and social matters.

**Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to their training needs to perform various household activities/roles**

Activity type	Rural women respondents (n=200)		Rural men respondents (n=200)		$\chi^2$ -value	Sig. level
	Yes (#)	Yes (%)	Yes (#)	Yes (%)		
<b>Household management</b>						
Sanitation	197	98.5	33	16.5	275.151	0.000
Child Care	193	96.5	33	16.5	260.401	0.000
Safety/security	192	96.0	21	10.5	293.651	0.000
Family health care	188	94.0	32	16.0	245.818	0.000
Household chores	182	91.0	28	14.0	237.754	0.000
Handicraft making	169	84.5	15	7.5	238.688	0.000
Fuel collection	126	63.0	22	11.0	116.002	0.000
Education and socialization of children	186	93.0	49	24.5	193.620	0.000
Community management/development	156	78.0	35	17.5	146.707	0.000
Social matters	140	70.0	38	19.0	105.314	0.000
Conflict management	153	76.5	37	18.5	134.897	0.000

**Table 4. Ranking of household training needs by mean scores about the importance of training in various activities**

Activity type	Rural women respondents (n=200)			Rural men respondents (n=200)			Sig. level
	Mean <sup>1</sup>	Standard Deviation	Ranking order	Mean <sup>1</sup>	Standard Deviation	Ranking order	
Household management							
Sanitation	4.285	0.926	2	0.530	1.279	4	0.000
Child Care	4.300	1.051	1	0.505	1.207	6	0.000
Family health care	4.045	1.257	5	0.475	1.177	7	0.000
Household chores	3.910	1.436	6	0.460	1.202	8	0.000
Safety/security	4.140	1.147	3	0.340	1.077	10	0.000
Handicraft making	3.620	1.752	7	0.240	0.869	11	0.000
Fuel collection	2.560	2.149	11	0.350	1.031	9	0.000
Education and socialization of children	4.110	1.329	4	0.800	1.487	1	0.000
Social matters	2.870	2.065	10	0.610	1.283	2	0.000
Community management/development	3.200	1.875	8	0.525	1.227	5	0.000
Conflict management	3.165	1.925	9	0.570	1.282	3	0.000

<sup>1</sup> The scale used for estimating mean for the importance of training is: 1=to some extent; 2=to below average extent; 3=to average extent; 4=to above average extent; and 5= to much extent.

- For household management, the women's responses were much stronger than men. The women's order of priority for household activities level training was sanitation followed by child care, safety, family health care, general household chores and handicrafts making. Areas like education and socialization of children, community development and social matters at community level were areas of women's interest for training purposes in decreasing order.
- Rural men respondents at household level management ranked, education and socialization of children, social matters and conflict management as most important matters of the family, while rural women awarded the highest ranking in importance order to areas like children care, sanitation and safety for household management.

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