

AN ANALYSIS OF THE PARTICIPATION OF RURAL WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES IN AGRICULTURE SECTOR OF SINDH: A CASE STUDY OF DISTRICT TANDO ALLAHYAR

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ABSTRACT

Pakistan is economically reliant on the agriculture sector and provides for the livelihood of the rural population in all four provinces of Pakistan. The study highlights the extent of the work and important role of the rural women in the agriculture sector and its allied fields along with household affairs in the district Tando Allahyar of Sindh. Although their performance and contribution to household economy has not much been recognized and rewarded in comparison their male counter parts with whom they work shoulder to shoulder in the crop production, livestock, fish farming, poultry and other agro based industries along with the household activities. The survey study depicts that more than 65 percent of the rural women carry out various jobs in crop production. They keep and care for the livestock, poultry and fish farming along with other household activities. They work for 15 hours in a day from dawn to dusk. The rural women of the district Tando Allahyar of Sindh do not have enough access to the finance and credit facility. They suffer from mal nutrition and the lack of proper healthcare and from inadequacy of proper skill and educational facilities. Their level of participation is very nominal in the decision making at home or in their own circle of society.

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They have a very limited excess to economic opportunities as such it is major obstacle in the development and the change of their socio economic conditions. The prevalence of sexual harassment also serves as a great hindrance in their participation of major decision making process.

INTRODUCTION

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan with an estimated population of 184.35 million in the four provinces Sindh, Punjab, Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtun Khunwa. The major part 114.48 million of the total population of Pakistanis lives in the rural areas while 69.87 million the urban areas. Since the partition of the subcontinent in 1947, however economy of Pakistan has remained highly dependent upon the agriculture sector and this is the main livelihood of the 64 percent of rural population. The agriculture sector of Pakistan contributes 21.4 percent to the Gross Domestic Product and absorbs the 45 percent of total labor force¹ (Pakistan Economic Survey 2012-2013).

There is an availability of fertile land and natural resources in abundance in all the four province of Pakistan. In the area of agricultural output in the country, Punjab Province is the major contributor followed by the Sindh with the sufficient cultivated land of 08 million hectares from the 14 million hectares produces 30% of rice, 25% of cotton, 23% of the sugarcane, 18% of the wheat, in the country². (Pakistan Agricultural Census, 2010)

The Sindh Province with an estimated population 30,440 thousand as per the census 1998, comprising 16,098 million male and 14,342 thousand female population on the basis of the growth rate of 2 to 2.8 percent, the same has been accounted 54,888 thousands in 2011 living in the rural and urban areas.³ (Pakistan Economic Survey 2012-2013). The historical data of the rural and urban population of Sindh can be envisaged from the table no. 1.

Table 1: Population of Provinces of Sindh

| Total | | | | Urban | | | Rural | | |
|-------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|-------|--------|
| Census Year | Both | Male | Female | Both | Male | Female | Both | Male | Female |
| 1972 | 14,156 | 7,574 | 6,582 | 5,726 | 3,131 | 2,595 | 8,430 | 4,443 | 3,987 |
| 1981 | 19,029 | 9,999 | 9,030 | 8,243 | 4,433 | 3,810 | 10,786 | 5,566 | 5,220 |
| 1998 | 30,440 | 16,098 | 14,342 | 14,840 | 7,904 | 6,935 | 15,600 | 8,193 | 7,407 |

Source: Government of Pakistan, Pakistan Economic Survey 2012-13

The province of Sindh has the rich culture, norms, values and traditions. Besides being the centre of trade and commercial activities, the province is also the major producer of agricultural products. The sugarcane, cotton, rice wheat, bananas and mangoes are cultivated in the different parts of Sindh. The agriculture sector of Sindh plays his main role in the contribution in gross domestic product. Sindh is well known due to large production of the best quality of rice particularly in the upper Sindh particularly in the district of Larkana and Nawab Shah and large and fine quantity of cotton crop is cultivated in the Hyderabad, Nawabshah, and Sanghar Districts of Sindh. In lower Sindh the fine quality sugarcane is produced.

Both men and women play an important role in feeding the world. According to an estimate, women produce more than 50% of the total world food Women’s contribution in agricultural labour force in developed countries is 36.7% while, it is about 43.6% in developing countries⁴. (Luqman & Khan, 2006)

The rural women contribute 53 percent from total work and give 20 percent extra times than men. These activities and productive work done by women is not appreciated more ever the negative influence of the traditional economy and policies have impact on women⁵ (Humera, & Zafar, 2012)

Despite the extent of the work and important role in the agriculture sector their performance has not much been recognized against

their male counter parts with whom they work shoulder to shoulder in the crop production, livestock, fish farming, poultry and other agro based industries along with the household activities. In modern era the rural women of the Sindh have not enough access to the financial, educational, modern technology, healthcare and nutritional, land ownership right, even their participation is very nominal in the decision making at home or in their own society and they have the limited economic opportunities to develop themselves and the society. The sexual harassment at work is also another challenge for the rural women.

METHODOLOGY

For the data collection total 200 rural women respondents from the four villages of the two union councils respectively Missan and Sheikh Moosa out of the 20 union councils of district Tando Allahyar were selected through random sampling. The interview used as a tool for data collection and 50 rural women respondents from each village of the study area were selected through the simple random sampling. A three point Likert scale interview questions (Regular=3, Not Regularly=2 and Not at all=1) was used as a tool to evaluate the participation of the rural women of District Tando Allahyar in the pre and post crop production activities, livestock Management, fish farming, poultry, forestry and etc. along with the house hold activities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of my study are as follow:

1. To evaluate unrecognized and unrewarded involvement of rural women in the agriculture sector and its allied fields along with the household.
2. To identify the challenges that effects to rural women's the social and economic benefits.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Following hypothesis has been designed for this research.

- H₁: Providing the credit facility and technical knowledge will be encouraging factor to recognize the role the rural women's involvement in the agriculture sector.
- H₂: Socio economic factors have the great influence on the uplift and economic empowerment of the rural women.

The Role and Impact of the Rural Women in the Agriculture Sector

Women in developing countries, especially, constitute a large part of the total workforce, particularly in the agricultural sector. Because of this important role, they constitute a substantial economic resource⁶ (Jayawardhana 1992)

In this modern era poor and economically backward countries who are struggling for the better result can't achieve economic goals without the equally reorganization of the significant socio economic characteristics and performance of the rural women in respect to their economic contribution, planning and management, facilitate to others especially the family members and remarkably contributes to the household economic activities by generating revenue from the allied fields of agriculture sector such as fishing, poultry, livestock, embroidery and other agro based activities. Almost two decades ago the same was voiced by the United Nations. Therefore the rural women must be empowerment in the socio economic activities.

Women's work remains unrecognized and formally unorganized despite the fact that women's contributions to the family are vital; in many cases women are the breadwinners and work longer hours than men⁷ (UNDP 1995).

The Contribution of the Rural Women in the Crop Production Activities:

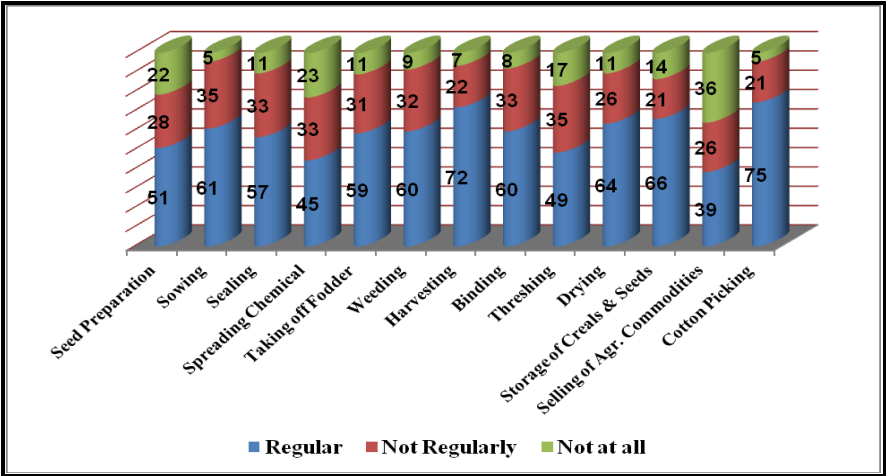
The part of the rural women in the pre and post crop production is remarkable that she carry out with activities of the household (i.e. are preparing food, washing clothes, to fetch fresh water for drinking, to collect wood for fuel, look after their elder and physically unfit family members and etc) and sub sector of the agriculture especially livestock management which is generally counted as the job the women in the rural areas of the Sindh (i.e. are cleaning the animal sheds, watering the animals, collect eggs, milking, and etc). Along with this the rural women also make efforts onwards to revenue generation like selling milk, eggs, butter and ghee). The scope of rural women work can be witnessed from the annual activities in the agriculture sector that from sowing to harvesting the crops productions in Sindh especially account for more than one-third. Similarly, women's participation is the highest in cotton production in Punjab and Sindh. Picking cotton is exclusively a women's task.

The value addition of important crops in Pakistan's agricultural production account for 25.24 percent and registered a growth of 2.3 percent compared to a growth of 7.4 percent last year. The important crops including wheat, maize, rice, sugarcane and cotton witnessed growth in production of 3.23 percent, 6.74 percent, -10.05 percent, 6.98 percent and -4.19 percent respectively. Other crops contributed 12.34 percent to value addition in overall agriculture⁸ (Pakistan Economic Survey, 2012-13).

A rural woman spent 39.34 and 50.42 percent of their time in rice and cotton growing areas, respectively⁹ (Quadri & Jahan, 1982)

The rural women contribute in various activities of cultivation of the cotton crops like weeding and thinning 59.5 percent, manuring 29.0 percent, hoeing 52.5 percent, cotton cleaning 77.0 percent stick removing 72.5 percent and storage of seed cotton for domestic use (20.0%) (Asghar, 1994).¹⁰

Figure 2: Participation of the Rural Women in the Crop Production Operations (%)



Source: Survey Data, 2013

The figure 2 highlights the result of the replies of the sample female respondents working in agriculture sector regular without any break, not regularly working with the breaks and not at all those who are not working in the agriculture field with male partner. The average 66 percent rural women who are working without any break or regular in their activities related to the crop production while 32 percent women are not regularly performing activities pertaining with the crop production and only 13 percent are not working in the agricultural field during the pre harvesting activities that are seed preparation, sowing, sealing, spreading chemicals, tacking off fodder and harvesting. Furthermore, most of the post harvesting operations are completed by the female worker the same can viewed from the sample survey result that 61 percent women remain engaged in the operation of binding, threshing, drying, storage of cereals and seeds, and etc. But their role in the marketing activities is not much encouraging only 39 percent rural women have the access to the market or to directly to sell their products who are working regular with their male partners. 26 percent women are not working regularly and 36 percent not at all.

The contribution of rural women operations in the crop production have been average and scored on the basis three areas regularly, not regularly, and not work at all during from the sowing the seed till to the cultivation. The table no.3 appended below highlights the response of the sample survey respondents that mean of pre harvesting activities is 2.42 and average score of this session is 484. The mean and average score of after harvesting is presents 2.47 and 493. The extent work of the rural women can be judged from the replies of the respondent of random sample survey that cotton picking, harvesting, sowing the seed, drying the crops and storage have been ranked 1,2,3,4 and 5 respectively.

Table 2: Ranking of Participation of the Rural Women in the Crop Production Operations

| Crop Production Activities | Mean | Score | Ranks |
|---|------|-------|-------|
| Seed Preparation | 2.30 | 459 | 11 |
| Sowing | 2.57 | 513 | 3 |
| Sealing | 2.46 | 492 | 9 |
| Spreading Chemical | 2.22 | 443 | 12 |
| Taking off Fodder | 2.48 | 495 | 8 |
| Weeding | 2.51 | 502 | 7 |
| Harvesting | 2.66 | 531 | 2 |
| Binding | 2.52 | 503 | 6 |
| Threshing | 2.32 | 463 | 10 |
| Drying | 2.53 | 506 | 4 |
| Storage of Cereals and agricultural Commodities | 2.53 | 505 | 5 |
| Selling of agricultural Commodities | 2.03 | 405 | 13 |
| Cotton Picking | 2.70 | 540 | 1 |

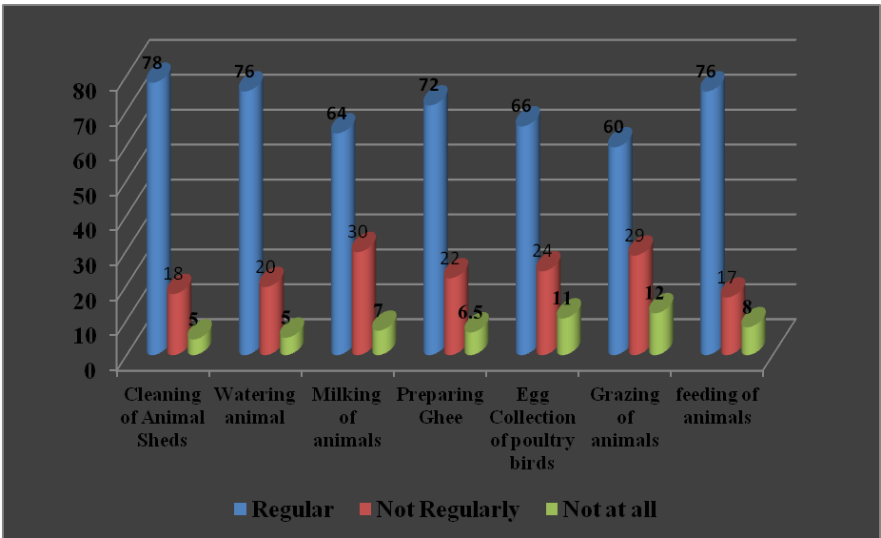
Source: Survey Data, 2013

Participation in the Allied Fields of Agriculture Sector

The performance in the agriculture and its allied fields: fisheries, livestock, forestry and poultry during the can be witnessed from the economic survey of Pakistan 2012-2013 is as follow:

- The Livestock sector which has a 55.4 percent share in the agriculture grew by 3.7 percent in 2012-13.
- The Fishing sector having a share of 2.0 percent in agriculture grew by 0.7 percent as against last year's positive growth of 3.8 percent.
- Forestry sector having a share of 2.0 percent in agriculture posted a nominal growth of 0.1 percent this year as compared to positive growth of 1.7 percent last year.

Figure 3: The Participation of rural women in Live Stock Management (%)



Source: Survey Data, 2013

The Figure 3 highlights that the livestock management is undertaken by the rural women that have the noteworthy impact on the household economy in result of their key contribution to keeping and care of the live stock. The random survey result points that average percentage of rural women perform the livestock activities on regular basis cleaning of animal sheds, watering the animal and feeding the animal is 78, 76 and 76 percent respectively. The milking of animal, preparing of ghee and eggs collection is 64, 72 and 66 percent by the sale of milk, and ghee, butter and eggs that contribute to the household economy. These different livestock activities have been ranked on the basis of operational performance of the selected sample of rural women figure out that cleaning of animal sheds, watering the animal and feeding the animal the watering the animal is respectively rank 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, and the score is 547, 541 and 535, the mean of these activities 2.74, 2.71 and 2.68. While rank and mean of their contribution to the income generating activities including milking of animal is 4th and 2.65, egg collection of poultry is 5th and 2.57 and preparation of ghee is 6th and 2.55.

The majority of women involved in livestock activities were of middle age (66%) and illiterate (42.0%). Participation of respondents was high in selling of milk and milk products with mean value of 1.26 and SD 0.66 as compared to other activities. Rural women had minimum participation in poultry raising and selling of eggs/ghee having mean value of 2.22 and 2.32, respectively. It is concluded that females are active participants in livestock activities but the factors like lack of confidence, social security, low literacy level in village, social conflicts and lack of media information inhibit their participation in livestock activities¹¹ (Munwar, Luqman & Khalid, 2013).

Table 4: Ranking of the Rural Women’s Participation in the Live Stock Activities (%)

| Livestock Activities | Mean | Score | Ranks |
|---------------------------------|------|-------|-------|
| Cleaning of Animal Sheds | 2.74 | 547 | 1 |
| Watering animal | 2.71 | 541 | 2 |
| Feeding of animals | 2.68 | 535 | 3 |
| Preparing Ghee | 2.65 | 530 | 4 |
| Milking of animals | 2.57 | 513 | 5 |
| Egg Collection of poultry birds | 2.55 | 510 | 6 |
| Grazing of animals | 2.48 | 495 | 7 |

Source: Survey Data, 2013

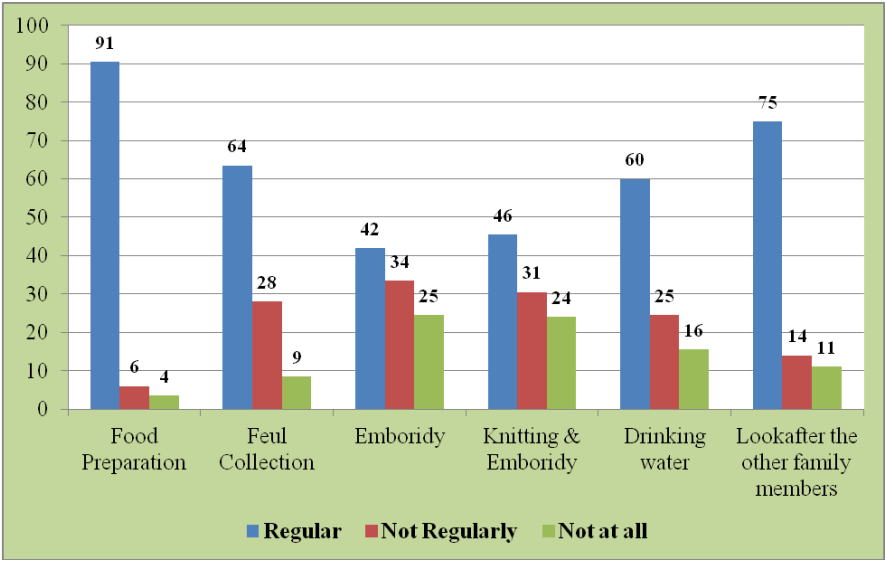
Furthermore, the survey result in table no. 4, provide us the ranking on the basis of allocation and distribution of work of rural women in the livestock activities. Watering to their animals is among the main function of rural women in the livestock activities so ranks number 1 mean is 2.81. The second rank is to collection of eggs of birds and mean is 2.78. The third ranking in the livestock activities of rural women is cleaning of the animal sheds regularly having the 2.76 mean. 2.72, 2.67, 2.60 and 2.49 are the means pertaining to the feeding the animals, preparing the ghee, milking the animal, grazing the animals respectively with rank orders of 4,5,6 and 7.

HOUSE HOLD CHORES

In addition to agricultural activities women often devote more time and resources under their control towards improving household concerns related to food security as compared to men and their involvement was significant in term of decision making authority¹² (Saito and Weideman, 1990)

The rural women contributions in the agriculture sector and its allied fields are of the high extent. On the other hand she fulfills all her household duties with full devotion and spirit. Preparing food, cleaning the house, fetch drinking water from the remote area, to collect wood for the fire and look after the children and other family members. She takes continuous efforts to contribute the house hold economy by doing the knitting and embroidery. Therefore we can say the rural women perform multi dimensional role.

Figure 4: Allocation of Rural Women in Household Activities (%)



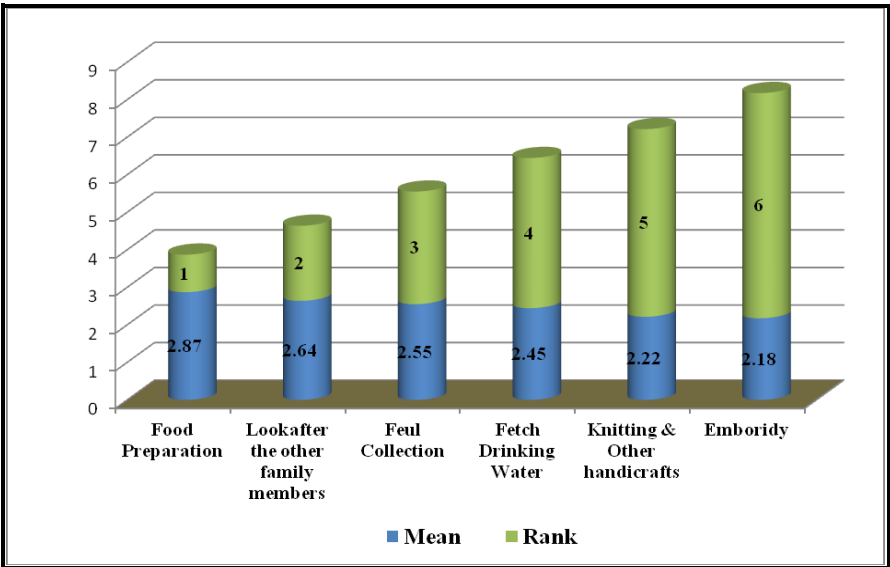
Source: Survey Data, 2013

The figure 4 reveals that at what extent the selected sample respondents of rural women contribute in the household activities and generate revue from the knitting and embroidery such as Ajrak, Sindhi Topi, and etc regularly. The same can be witnessed that 91 percent sample selected respondents of rural women who work in the agriculture sector prepare food and 75 percent respondents look after their senior and elderly family member regularly without any break. More than 60 percent respondents

collect firing woods and drinking water. 46 percent respondents are contributing the household economy.

While the figure 5 highlights the mean and ranking of their household activities of the sample selected respondents prepare food (mean 2.87, rank 1st), look after the children and other family members (mean 2.64, rank 2nd), collect the fuel (mean 2.55, rank 3rd), fetch the drinking water (mean 2.45, rank 4th) the other activities including knitting and other handicrafts, (mean 2.22, rank 5th) and embroidery (mean 2.18, rank 6th) these contribute the household economy

Figure 5: Ranking of Rural Women’s Participation in Household Activities



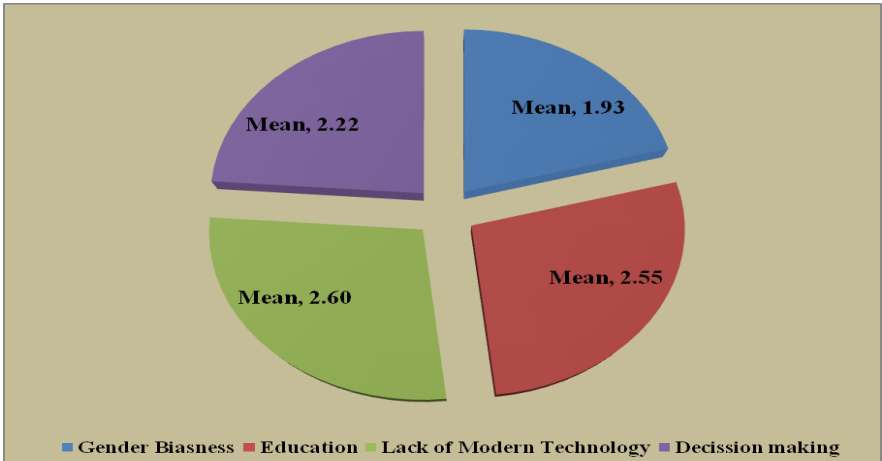
Source: Survey Data, 2013

THE RURAL WOMEN’S ISSUES

In modern era the rural women of the Sindh have inadequate access to the financial, educational, modern technology, healthcare and nutritional, land ownership right, even their participation is very

nominal in the decision making at home or in their own society and they have the limited economic opportunities to develop themselves and the society. Due to the traditional and cultural barriers they could not go beyond the home to find out the good buyers of their products and reliant on the local middleman as result of that they are unable to get good price. The attitude and behavior of the landlords is the matter of the concern for the rural women. The sexual threats and demands from their landlords or owners damage rural women socio economic efficiency.

Figure 6: Limitations of the Rural Women in District Tando Allahyar

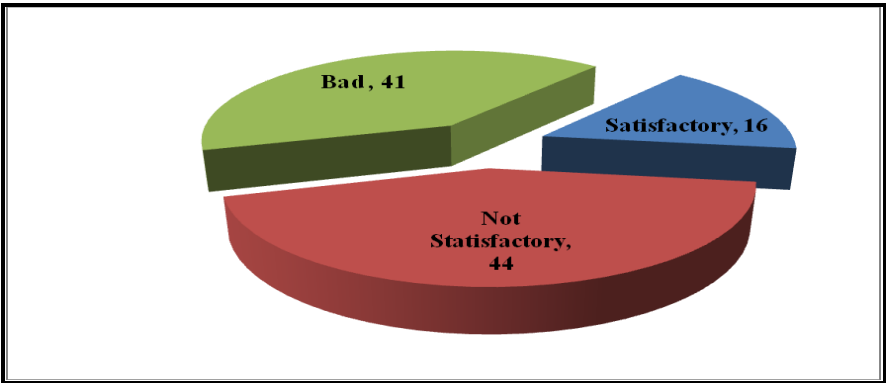


Source: Survey Data, 2013

The figure 6, focus the hindrances effect the performance and efficiency of the rural women in the crop production, livestock management, contribution to the household economy. The mean of the gender biasness 1.93 reflects that the social difference between the male and female. 2.60 Mean of modern technology shows their lack of access to use the modern tools or equipments to produce more and competitive product. The mean of education is 2.55 shows their level of education that become the cause of their poor performance to the economic contribution. Even in this modern era they have the lack access to get information related to crop

production’s technique, livestock management and planning, market price of their products and etc from the information sources such as electronic, mass, and print media are easy to access and educating. The rural women empowerment can witnessed from mean 2.22 of the respondents replies that they have not the decision making power in the house and in their society. In this electronic period.

Figure 7: Concern of the Rural Women about the attitude and behavior of their Land Lords (%)



Source: Survey Data, 2013

Figure 7, depicts the result in response to the behavior of their landlords and other males with rural women at job field or in the society more than 80% respondent of the selected sample shown their discomfort or un satisfaction at the work field. The rural women effect physically and mentally due to the sexual harassment and violence. The rural women also face custom of Karo Kari or the honor killing is widespread in all rural and tribal areas of Sindh.

CONCLUSION

The agriculture sector is major contributor in the gross domestic product of Pakistan and provides the large number of employment to the both male and female. The rural women have the enormous role in the crop production, forestry, fishing, livestock and as well

as in other agro base industries. The rural women participate in the all jobs during the pre and post crop production from sowing to the harvesting such as sowing, sealing, spreading chemical, taking off the fodder, weeding and harvesting, binding, threshing, drying, storage the cereals and seeds shoulder to shoulder with their male partner along with their house hold chores. Although their huge contribution in the agriculture sector and its allied fields has not been acknowledged and rewarded by society and government. In perspective of the uplift and economic empowerment of rural women major obstacle is not have better socio economic conditions such as sexual harassment, gender biasness, land ownership right, education, right of decision of making, leisure activities. In this regards the various policies has been documented for the betterment of the women especially rural women by the planners and managers of Pakistan but the contribution of rural women in the agriculture sector has remain unrewarded. The non-profit and welfare organization make the ground efforts and activate such promotional campaigns which can be platform where the significant contribution of the rural women in the sector of agriculture and its sub sectors be rewarded and equality with the male partner in the economic and social aspects. The survey report result highlights extent of the contribution of rural women is about 65 percent in the crop production and 70 percent livestock management and also generate revenue from it by producing the dairy products and working in the other agro based industries. While having the huge participation in front to their male partner they have not access to the credit facility, facility of the training to adopt the modern methods of the crop production and livestock management. to acknowledge the participation of the rural women the joint organizational efforts by the public and private organizations should be taken at the micro level to sponsorship or funding to the rural women in the field of the crop production, livestock management, and the other sub sectors of agriculture to transform their condition. To provide the access and training to the rural women to use the modern techniques and tools in crop

production, livestock management, poultry, fishing and forestry to improve the productivity. The quality research and training institutions and service centers are establish at union council level rather than the in the urban areas with the trained and experts female staff to conduct training programs to help and train the rural women to adopt and use the modern techniques and tools.

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